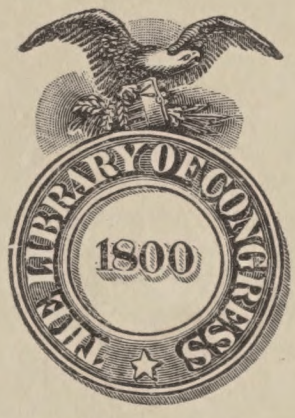
Taming a Tomboy

From the German
of
Emmy von Rhoden
by
Felix L. Oswald



"WHAT'S THE MATTER, PET?" ASKED THE SQUIRE.—Page 22.
Tam. a Tom.]

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TRANSLATED FROM THE TWENTY-FIFTH EDITION OF
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ADAPTED FOR AMERICAN READERS.

BY

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TAMING A TOMBOY.

CHAPTER I.

"GUESS what happened in the stable!" cried a merry-eyed girl, bursting into a room where her father's guests were looking at a photograph album "Try, pa, I give you three guesses!"

"What's the matter, Fan?" laughed her father; "have the roosters been fighting?"

"Better than that," said Fanny; "guess again."

Squire Malden was a justice of the country court, and as strict as a provost marshal in the court-house, but in his own house Miss Fanny had things all her own way.

"Better tell me at once, pet," said he, patting her curly head, "did Joe fall down the ladder again?"

"No such luck," chuckled the girl; "I thought you would miss it; well, I'll tell you; it beats all that—Brownie's got pups at last."

Everybody laughed, and even the old village parson could not help smiling at the sprightliness of the

little romp who had rushed in with one stocking down and her hair all full of straw.

"Yes, and they are all chestnut-brown like the old one," she continued; "and now come on, pa, Joe isn't home, and I want you to help me get one of those seed-boxes down from the hayloft and make them a nice warm bed."

Squire Malden was on the point of rising, when his wife put her hand on Fanny's arm. "Come to my room, dear," said she kindly, "I want to tell you something."

Fanny bridled, but her stepmother's eye precluded resistance, and she went along pouting.

"Well, what's up?" she inquired when they were alone.

"Nothing, dear," said Mrs. Malden, "but I want you to hurry and go to your room and dress. I suppose you didn't know we had company?"

"Yes, I did," said Fanny, "but I didn't care."

"But they do, child; have you no more sense than to rush in the way you did, all full of straw like a feedstore man's stable boy? You are fifteen years now, and should know better than that. Oh—and just look at your shoes—all tattered and dusty and one of your stockings dangling! What will young Scheffer say? He will laugh at you."

"Well, let him," snapped Fanny; "the idea! As if I cared for his opinion, the stuck-up dude with his goggle-glasses! Let him go and goggle a dress-maker's doll."

"But you will set them all a-talking. Heavens! Look at your left sleeve! Torn in two places! No, no, that won't do; hurry up now and dress."

Fanny had turned to the window and looked down in the garden. "I believe one of those dogs down there on the lawn has got more brains than Fred Scheffer," she chuckled; "he reminds me of that performing monkey we saw in Willdorf last year."

"Never mind now; did you hear what I told you?" asked her stepmother.

"Oh, I ain't going to dress for a lot of fools," said Fanny; "this is our own house; they needn't come here if I am not good enough for them; I'm not going to change my dress at this time of the day."

Mrs. Alden bit her lip. "Just as you please about that," said she after a moment's reflection; "only in that case you have to go up to your room and stay there. Go at once now," said she, rising; "you stay in your room and that's where you will eat your supper."

Fanny hesitated, then marched out and slammed

the door as hard as she could. But up in her room she sat down on the bed and burst into tears. "Oh, my doggies, my poor little doggies," she sobbed, "she just wanted to spoil my fun, that's all. Oh, what in the world made pa marry again? We were so much better off when we were alone! Scolding and fault-finding from morning till night! And now she wants to turn me into a fashion-ape, but I'll make her find out she can't do it."

Fourteen years of wild freedom had made Squire Malden's daughter almost unmanageable. She went and came as she pleased, and studied her lessons only when she was tired of other pastimes, or the weather was too rough for a horse-race. After she once had mastered the alphabet she did make progress in some of her studies, but that was only because she had come across some interesting books, and was fond of reading about wars and battles and adventures in foreign countries. She had a French governess at the time when children learn to repeat words like parrots, and could now read books in two languages, but writing was less amusing, and her compositions were still full of spelling blunders. Her last governess had left in a huff, and Miss Fanny had now private lessons at the parsonage—twice a week, and frolicked about her father's

big farm for the rest of the time, chasing butterflies, climbing trees, angling for bass in Pine Creek, or helping the hands in the fields, as the spirit happened to move her. But she never came home without some little present for her father, and had made him so fond of her that he could not find it in his heart to scold her. She was his only child, too, and her smile and her eyes reminded him of her lost mother. If he did try to read her the riot act she was around his neck in a moment and literally stifled his words with kisses.

"As long as he loves me what do I care who doesn't?" seemed to be the meaning of her conduct for the last year and a half; and at the slightest reproof she flared up in a manner that made her stepmother glad to keep out of her way, unless she felt it her unavoidable duty to interfere.

The visitors stayed for supper, and Squire Malden had repeatedly looked toward the door and an empty chair at the end of the table. "Where is Fanny, I wonder?" he asked at last.

Mrs. Malden rang the bell. "Go and tell Fanny to come down to supper, Rosa."

Fanny was still sitting on her bed. She had locked the door and Rosa had to knock loudly and repeatedly.

"The old lady wants you to come down right away," she said; "supper's ready."

"Oh, is it," sneered Fanny; "well, tell her she can eat my share. I'm not going to come down this evening, that's what she told me herself not more than an hour ago."

"And I don't blame you, Miss Fanny," whispered Rosa; "the way she orders you around, just to show that she has something to say."

Orders us around, Rosa probably meant. She, too, fretted under the new order of things and lamented the lost paradise of the free and easy interregnum, when the squire was often gone for days together and romping Fanny was mistress of the big house.

Supper was still waiting when Rosa re-entered the room.

"Miss Fanny says she doesn't want no supper after what you told her, ma'am," she reported, with several twinkles in her black Austrian eyes.

Squire Malden looked at his wife. "Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Fanny does not feel well, I think," stammered Mrs. Malden; "perhaps it can do no harm if she misses a meal."

"Go and see if Dr. Arnold is still in his garden,"

said the squire, but before the messenger had left the room the order had to be countermanded. Fanny's voice was heard in the yard and the trundling of her iron hoop, and every now and then a peal of merry laughter, when the dogs tried to join in the game and got trundled off their feet.

The squire stepped to the window. "What's the matter," said he, puzzled, "she doesn't seem to be sick?"

"I'm sorry I have to explain the nature of her disorder," said Mrs. Malden with a perceptible blush; "it's not easy to cure, and in plain language is called waywardness," and then paused to mitigate the form of an outline of her experience with the squire's romping daughter.

Baron Scheffer burst out laughing. "That's nothing," said he, with the tact of a man of the world, trying to divert the episode of its moral importance; "girls will have their tantrums; that's their way of sowing their wild oats, and a much cheaper way than their brothers. It has often surprised me how suddenly such products of nature blossom out into young ladies. She'll be all right in a year or two."

But on the way home he modified his comments, and his wife could hardly find words hard enough to

express her horror of tomboys. "Talk about stepmothers being prejudiced," said she; "I should like to know what an angel from heaven could do in that poor woman's place; the kinder she treats her the worse she gets, and if she tries a different plan she risks stirring up a hornets' nest."

"Yes, you are right, mother," said Fred, when he felt a demand for his casting vote. A sort of instinct seemed to tell him that he had no chance with girls of that sort.

When the guests were gone the old parson stayed behind. He had baptized and confirmed Miss Tomboy and took more than a neighbor's interest in her welfare. But he hardly knew how to begin, and there was a pause of embarrassment while the Rev. Sanders walked slowly up and down the room, waiting in vain for somebody else to break the silence.

"There's no use mincing words, old friend," said he at last, putting his hand on the squire's shoulder; "it won't do to let things go on this way; we can't manage that girl any longer; the plain truth is she has outgrown our resources of education."

Squire Malden looked up with an expression of undisguised surprise. "Our resources?" he asked, "how do you mean?"

"I mean just this: we have to send Fanny to a boarding-school. Under the circumstances it's the only remedy."

"A boarding-school!" cried the squire, as if his adviser had proposed commitment to the county jail. "Why, what has she done?"

The Rev. Sanders smiled. "I almost knew you would ask that question; you have a prejudice against college education, I know, but in this case it's a lesser evil. Just ask yourself where we are drifting. That girl defies the three of us, and seems to glory in her independence. We had a plain proof of that this evening."

"Oh, is that what you mean? I'll give her a talking, I promise you; it would be bad if we can't make her mind her mother. But a boarding-school! It would drive her crazy in a week. She's the very kind of a girl who would defy a whole faculty of pipeclay professors and then jump out of a third-story window. Scheffer is right; children will be children, and I don't see why boys should have a monopoly of wild oats. Time will mend all that. What do you say, Annie?"

"I would have agreed with you a year ago," said Mrs. Malden, "but after doing the very best in my power, and things going the way you see, I cannot

help thinking Mr. Sanders is right. It's really the only remedy. Why, do you know that I am unable to make her attend to her lessons for twenty minutes, even in winter? If the weather drives her indoors she may take up a book and let me start her writing or drawing, but if one of the dogs should happen to scratch at the door, up she jumps and down go her books; she has seen a chance for a better pastime, and Brownie or Jack have to trot around the floor with her toy-wagon.''

''That's just like her,'' laughed the squire; ''she's really nothing but an overgrown baby. A boarding-school could do her no good. She would just fool her time away, and we had better wait till she gets a little older.''

''Don't you believe that,'' said the parson; ''she's the very girl who has pluck enough to work her way to the head of her class, as you see her climb to the top of your walnut tree when the village boys start the competition. The spur of a competitive examination would rouse all her energies, and give her motives for exertion that have been lacking for years. And besides, the 'never too late to mend' is a dangerous proverb in such cases. After her stubborn disposition has once been confirmed it might be too late. And I know the very place that would

suit you. Did you ever hear of Miss Reymar's Collegiate Institute? It's in the hills, just west of Willdorf, in a big park, with a wonderful view of the mountains. If you could see her pupils you wouldn't believe that they are pining away with homesickness. Most of them feel at home the first week, and nearly all before the end of a month. It's no barrack life, like in some schools. They room two and two, and can take their meals in their own rooms if they don't feel well for any reason. Six hours of play a day is enough for any girl, and besides they give them extra holidays for excursions."

The parson paused, but Squire Malden made no reply. He sat brooding in his easy-chair and had let his pipe go out—a sure symptom of distress.

"Give me time," said he at last; "don't forget that she's our only child. I know I will feel like tearing out a part of my soul, and——"

"We do not want to hurry you, dear," said Mrs. Malden kindly; "of course, we have to give you time to think it over, and perhaps you will agree with us for the very reason you mention as an objection. We cannot afford to spoil our only child."

She stopped, feeling that she was treading on dangerous ground.

"Perhaps you are right," faltered the squire; "we have to do our duty, of course, and if I thought there was danger in delay I would let her start to-morrow. But a few days surely can make no great difference. Let me think it over, then, and perhaps I can see my way clearer in a week or two."

But the decision came sooner.

Early the next morning Squire Malden caught his daughter in the act of climbing on the hired man's shoulder and over on the back of one of the horses that had been harnessed to the hay wagon and were about to start for a distant mountain meadow.

"Good-morning, pa," cried Miss Tomboy the moment she caught sight of him; "don't I wish you could come along! We are going to Holberg hollow and there will be lots of fun flinging rocks at weasels and chasing swallow-tail butterflies. And there are stag-beetles, too; I'll fetch you one that I am sure you haven't got in your collection yet."

Squire Malden's eye rested on his daughter, and he could not help admitting that he had rarely seen a more ungirlish-looking child of her age. She was riding boy-fashion, with her feet—stockings down as usual, dangling left and right, and the skirts of her dress tucked up for a saddle-cushion. She wore the same jacket she had torn on the apple tree, and to

avoid criticisms of her unkempt locks had twisted them into a top-knot, and gathered them under her cap. She looked as if she had jumped out of bed and dressed in about a minute and a half, on hearing the creak of the wagon-wheels.

"Get down there, Fanny," said her father without a direct reply to her prattle; "I want you to come upstairs and attend to your lessons."

"Gee—git!" cried Miss Tomboy, turning her team toward the gate; "that's all right, pa. I'll be back after awhile. This is the last load, and we have to get it in early; Mr. Mayer says there will be a thunder shower this afternoon."

"Do you hear what I tell you, miss?" cried the squire, "why don't you get off that horse instead of talking about the weather?"

The little amazon burst out laughing. "La, pappy, " she tittered, "I wish you knew how you remind me of old Miss Owlson, when she tried to get mad at me. But you needn't be afraid that I'll stay long; I haven't got my breakfast yet, for one thing. We'll be back as quick as we can pitchfork this last load, if you are so particular; but you won't get any stag-bugs, this trip," and away went the wagon, leaving the squire to his own reflections. Before the team pulled out of sight Miss Tomboy

kissed her hand to him, but he thought he noticed something like a grin on the hired man's face.

"Sanders is right," he muttered; "that girl has to pack her trunk for Willdorf."

He went up to the breakfast-room, where his wife had been waiting for him, but he did not seem to notice that the table had been set. Squire Malden stepped out on the balcony, and his eyes wandered to the mountains that towered cloud-like blue on the western horizon.

"Did you have any trouble, Henry?" asked his wife, after watching him in silence for a few minutes.

"Nothing particular," said the squire; "only that parson has set me a-thinking, and since we are alone we might as well settle this matter. I'm going to write for a catalogue or prospectus of that college this morning, so we'll know what they will expect Fanny to bring along. Do you think you could get her ready to start on the first of July?"

"The first of next month, you mean? Oh, Henry! you are joking?"

"No, no, I'm in earnest; could you straighten out her things by that time? If you can, I'm going to announce it to her to-day, and that will leave us half a month to get ready."

"Why, yes, I could do my part in less than two

weeks,'' said Mrs. Malden; ''but excuse me—did you misunderstand us to be in such a hurry? Wouldn't the first of January do as well?''

''No, no,'' said the squire, ''don't let us miss this chance—or it might not come back.''

''How do you mean?''

The squire made no reply.

''Did you mean about that college?'' asked his wife. ''Do you suppose it would be too late next year on account of Fanny's age?''

''Oh, no, they'd take her any time,'' said the squire; ''but I—the fact is, Annie, I'm afraid I might change my mind before next year. I happen to have my eyes open to-day, so let's go ahead while we can.''

Squire Malden toyed with his breakfast, and was still drumming on his coffee-cup when Fanny burst into the room, rosy as the summer morning, but with her locks all disheveled and covered with hayseed. ''Didn't we make good time?'' she asked gayly, shaking the dust off her dress; ''I believe we trotted the horses more than half the way back. But you never saw a prettier load of hay; it had a full week to dry, and——''

''Never mind the hay, now, Fanny,'' said the squire, ''I want to talk to you.''

But, like Parson Sanders at the first mention of the project, the squire hardly knew how to begin. His daughter looked so happy and so unsuspecting that he could hardly find it in his heart to cloud that beaming face.

"Shall I help you to a sandwich, dear?" asked Mrs. Malden.

"Never mind; just watch me if I cannot help myself," laughed Fanny, cutting off a liberal slice of bread and proceeding to butter it an inch thick. Then she added several sections of sausage and tilted her chair back like a student in a club-house restaurant. "Oh, what about that talk, pappy," she asked with her mouth full of bread; "you wanted to tell me something, didn't you? Blaze away, then, before I skip again."

Squire Malden hesitated and actually came near repenting his purpose. There was time to retreat yet; he could lecture her on her unladylike appearance or her recent misdeeds and let her off with a threat, but he felt that the treaty of peace would be only a truce, and manned himself to proceed. "I want you to help your mother get your things ready, Miss Hayseed," said he, with his eyes on the balcony window; "we ought to have sent you to a boarding-school two years ago, but now we cannot

put it off any longer. I'm going to write to Willdorf this morning, and tell them to look for you by the first of July.''

If Squire Malden had expected a paroxysm of protest, he was mistaken. Fanny turned pale as death and stole a look at her stepmother, but she did not say a single word. Oh, no, she wasn't going to let the enemy see that the arrow had gone home. For, of course, she instantly guessed the hostile motive of the scheme and acquitted her father of all complicity in its concoction.

''It's for your own best, Fanny,'' resumed the squire; ''I suppose you can realize that yourself.''

''Realize what? It being best for me to get out of this?'' sneered the girl with her pallor suddenly yielding to a flaming red. ''Oh, yes, I can see that now, if I couldn't see it before. You remember how often you told me that good health was more important than Latin grammars, and now I'm going to be bundled off to a place where they pen you up all day in a stuffy room and feed you on what they can buy the cheapest—it's all right, though; I do wish July had come so you could get rid of me.''

''What are you talking about, Fanny? Don't you know we would——''

''Oh, I know all about it,'' snapped the girl,

pushing back her plate; "but never mind I'll find a place somewhere in the world where I am not in people's way."

She staggered out on the balcony and dropped into a chair, choking down her sobs and fixing her moist eyes on the sky where a flock of blackbirds were winging their way toward the distant mountains

"What's the matter, pet?" asked the squire, who had followed his daughter with a vague misgiving. "Haven't you a wrong idea about a boarding-house?"

Fanny did not seem to notice her father's presence, and her eyes still dwelt on that cloud of winged wanderers. "I do wish I could fly," said she at last; "I'd go where my mother is."

Mrs. Malden overheard those words and they pierced her heart like a knife. She, too, sank into a chair now, and buried her face in her hands, and when she finally lifted her eyes, Squire Malden was gone. Had he stolen out of the room to hide his emotions?

CHAPTER II.

MISS REYMAR, of the Willdorf Institute, had answered the squire's inquiry at once and agreed to all his propositions. Fanny was to arrive early in July and have a room of her own, unless she preferred the usual plan of playing at housekeeping with a roommate.

"And that's what you had better do, Fan," said the squire, who had petted his daughter these last few days in a manner which she had misconstrued as an attempt to make amends for a conscious wrong. "You see it's like this," said he, "if you don't like the partner they give you it will cost you only a word to get rid of her; but if you begin by rooming alone they will put you down as an oddity."

"All right," said Fanny, "that will be the best way, and if I do not like the girl they give me, I'll run her out and tell her it's all for her own good. Then I shall have the room all to myself, and it won't matter much what becomes of her."

All this in presence of her stepmother.

"Yes," continued Fanny, "that's a good scheme if people are in your way"—then suddenly rising and kissing her father's face—"isn't it, pappy, —then they are gone and away. You remember that song we found in that old magazine:

"'No room for Little Willie,
In the world he had no part—'"

Mrs. Malden quietly picked up her embroidery work and left the room.

"There," said the squire, "see what you have done, Miss Vixen; I'd give you a lesson you wouldn't forget if I didn't think you must be half crazy. What's the matter with you, anyhow? Are you trying to make yourself as disagreeable as possible just because we are doing our best to bear with you?"

Fanny's arm stole around his neck again. "Never mind, pa," said she, smoothing his hair, "I won't bother you much longer. The house will be nice and quiet then, won't it? You will soon forget me; and you had better burn up my butterflies, too, so there is nothing to remind you of the time when you and me used to play in Hollberg

glen. You will be all alone then, if you go up there again.''

''Go down in the garden, child,'' groaned the squire, ''I can stand this no longer.''

''Is she gone?'' whispered Mrs. Malden, peeping in with an arch smile when Miss Spitfire had left the room.

''What did she say when she had you around the neck, the last time?''

''Oh, the only sensible thing she has said this day—that she will not worry us much longer. That's really the only consolation; it's just a week to the first now, and in the meantime we must do what we can that she doesn't get another chance to insult you.''

But that opportunity soon recurred.

''Help me fold up these dresses, dear,'' said Mrs. Malden, entering Fanny's room with an armful of dry goods the next morning, ''and see what I brought you: a box with twelve different colored pencils, and a diary, where you can write your thoughts and plans when you are alone; it's just like talking to a friend.''

Fanny made no reply, but examined the diary with apparent approval.

"What's all this?" she asked at last, picking up a couple of lace-bordered aprons.

"That's on the list they sent us," explained Mrs. Malden; "they are kitchen-aprons; the pupils in Willdorf take their turn waiting at dinner every day, so they learn something about housekeeping."

Fanny's chance had come. "Oh, it's a school for servant girls then, is it?" she laughed. "That's nice; then I can hire out and make my own living and sleep in a garret, so I'm in nobody's way—oh, and what's this?" picking up a little album at the bottom of the collection of miscellanies, "a keepsake from Fred Scheffer! Isn't that pretty! If his mother should die maybe they will fling him out for his own good, too—he can hire out for an hostler then, and perhaps we can find jobs in the same hotel."

"I did not come here to listen to such talk," said Mrs. Malden, rising with quiet dignity; "you can pack your own trunk and send me word when you are done."

Fanny caught her father alone in the garden that afternoon and covered his hand with kisses. "They want me to pack, pappy, dear," she coaxed, "so I guess my time is near up; will you be good to me and let me have a little bit of a trunk, besides the

big one—just a little trunk-satchel, so I can pack up a few knickknacks of my own?''

''Why, of course, pet,'' said the squire, delighted at the unexpected rationality of her request; ''old Wenk is going to town this evening, and you shall have it to-morrow morning. But don't put any sausage in,'' he added, when Miss Tomboy began to dance in a circle; ''they are not going to starve you in Willdorf, whatever they might do to you.''

''They better hadn't, or I'll cook and eat one of their dudie-girls,'' laughed Miss Fanny, who had partly recovered her wild humor; ''no, indeed, that's the first thing I shall tell them when we get there; they can call me all the hard Greek and Latin names they please, but they must not call me too late for dinner.''

The hand trunk arrived that night, and early the next morning Miss Tomboy locked herself up in her room and began to pack. And such packing! First the beloved romping dress with the torn sleeves, then her summer shoes, dust and all; an old mouth-organ with five wheezy keys, a new dog-collar with four yards of rope, a stuffed canary bird, and last, but not least, a white glass bottle with a pet tree-toad. The poor little captive hopped

about in sore fright, but he had to go along. A piece of bread, well stamped and kneaded, served the purpose of a stopper, and, for greater security, Fanny tied an old newspaper around the bottle and a handkerchief around that. Before she packed it up she opened the stopper once more, and almost filled the bottle with bread-crumbs.

"There, now it's his own fault if he starves," she chuckled, and proceeded to squeeze in the glass prison somehow or other; but she realized that the trunk was a little more than full. For nearly ten minutes she thought she could not get the lock to close, but she managed it at last and hid the little key in her pocketbook.

On the eve of her departure Fanny made the rounds of all the farm buildings to bid her pets a long farewell. Ducks, geese, chickens, cows, all came in for a share of the basketful of tidbits she had brought along; but her last interview with the hunting-dogs almost broke her heart. They were all her good friends, and when Brownie's pups came waddling up to lick her hand she could hold out no longer and had to lean against a post to hide her tears.

"Poor things, they act as if they know all about it, don't they?" said old Joe, the stableman; "they

will miss you, Miss Fanny, and I don't blame you for crying; the good old times are gone, we all know that now. You will be a big fine lady when you come back, and we don't know if we shall see you again, but you may be sure that some of us will never forget you."

"Joe," said Fanny, drying her eyes with her sleeve, "will you do me a favor and try and smuggle this little fellow along when we go to Willdorf to-morrow?"

She had picked up the prettiest of the brown-eyed puppies, and was fondling it like a pet baby.

"That I will," said Joe; "if I just knew where you are going, I'd take him over to-night, so you would find him when you get there. He might start a-whining, you know, and we can't tell who is going along."

"That's so," said Fanny, after some reflection. "Well, have him ready, anyhow, and maybe I can carry him on my lap and keep him quiet."

Fanny rose early the next morning, and after breakfast the squire went down to superintend the loading of the baggage, and then returned to the parlor where Mrs. Malden was waiting to bid her stepdaughter good-by.

"Have you seen Fanny?" asked the squire when he found his wife alone.

"No, but she knew you were going to start at seven," said Mrs. Malden, "and Rosa helped her put on her traveling dress more than an hour ago."

"She's down in the garden, hunting flowers, I think," said Rosa demurely; "but she's ready dressed, all right enough."

"Perhaps she wants to pick you a sprig of forget-me-nots," said the squire, "I saw her give one to old Sanders last night."

Mrs. Malden made no reply.

They waited some time for Miss Tomboy and her flowers.

At last the squire looked at his watch. "It's past seven now," said he; "it must be some misunderstanding; let's go down in the garden and collar her."

"Are you looking for Miss Fanny?" asked the coachman; "she's gone ahead, and asked for us to pull out and catch up with her at Herrick's cabin; she wanted to tell little Charlie Herrick good-by—the little fellow that used to go fishing with her on Pine Creek, you know."

"Tell her to come back this minute," cried the squire, "and hurry—" but his wife stopped him.

"You will oblige me to let her have her own way this last morning," said she; "just hand her this bit of a package, and tell her I send her my love and a little keepsake."

"There they are now," said Joe when the old family coach lumbered up the rise at the west end of the village.

Yes, there stood Fanny, whispering to a little ragamuffin who had clambered up on a stump to get his towhead on a level with her face. The squire saw her put something in the boy's pocket, then she kissed his freckled face left and right, and danced down the road to meet the coach.

"We couldn't have struck better weather if we had waited a year, pa," said she; "just look at those little white feather-clouds; they mean sunshine all day; I have noticed that's if it's going to rain there isn't a cloud in sight at sunrise, but the sky looks slate-color instead of blue—" and so on, with the evident intention to avert censure by her volubility.

Squire Malden smiled and allowed her to continue her prattle till the coachman pulled up for a moment at the foot of the next hill. "Oh, I nearly forgot," said he, reaching in his overcoat pocket; "here, your mamma sends you this for a keepsake."

"Oh, what beautiful pools in that creek," said

Fanny who had seized the little package and crammed it into the lunch-basket at her feet. "Look, pa, don't you think there must be sun-perch in there? Just like the glen-pool on Pine Creek!"

It seemed to be her cue to avoid the very mention of her stepmother's name, and just then Joe came to her assistance.

"Here's your pet, Miss Fanny," said he, handing her a bundled-up puppy through the coach window. "I've put him in a little bag, but it's a gauze bag, so he can get all the air he wants."

"You will soon have luggage enough, if this keeps on," laughed the squire; "but hold on, you aren't going to take that thing along to college, are you?"

"Oh, please, let me keep him," begged Fanny. "I'll see to it that he is in nobody's way. It's the quietest, cleanest little pet you ever saw. And then I won't be all alone among strangers; you will let me keep one little friend, pa—oh, I know you will," kissing him violently again and again.

There was no resisting such arguments, but the squire shook his head. "I'm afraid it's against their rules," he said; "they might have no room for boarders of that sort; but of course we can try it and see what they will say."

"HERE'S YOUR ROOMMATE, NELL."—Page 43.

Tam. a Tom.]

Another volley of kisses, and more baby prattle, till finally the rocking of the coach and the warmth of the summer sun had their effect on the old man.

Squire Malden leaned back in his corner and began to nod, and only then the daughter of Eve stole a furtive look at the little package.

She squeezed it, and finally held it up and rattled it against her ear. "Money? No, too big for that; a framed photograph or a letter-weight, or something of that sort—pshaw—" tossing the package back in the basket and taking out a piece of cake to feed her pet pup.

They reached Willdorf after sundown, and of course put up at the hotel that first night. Fanny's weather prediction had been verified; the next morning, too, dawned bright and cool, and at nine o'clock Miss Tomboy stood before her father, ready dressed. Her gray mantilla and white straw hat set off her brown curls charmingly, but her eyes looked dim and swollen, and her father suspected that she had been crying all night.

"What is it, pet?" he asked kindly; "do you not feel well?"

Fanny looked toward the window, then suddenly turned and fell in her father's arms, crying as he

had never seen her cry in her life. She hugged him as if she would never release him again.

"Don't, now, don't," begged the squire; "you will get over this, darling, and you know we want you to come and see us next Christmas. We are going to write twice a week, your mamma and I, and tell you all the news, and you must do the same, whenever you have nothing else to do."

He took out his handkerchief to dry the poor girl's face, but still her tears welled up uncontrollably. Her little hand patted his shoulder as if she wanted to coax him to revoke his decision, and he felt that he would never have given his consent if he had foreseen all this. But it was too late now, and he gently disengaged the caressing arms and stroked back her loosened curls. "Come, be sensible, child; we have to go now; it can't be helped, you know."

"I don't want *her* to write me any letters," burst out Fanny, with sudden violence; "if she does I'll burn them; you can tell her that from me."

"Oh, hush, hush," begged the old man; "you would be ashamed of yourself, pet, if you only knew how you wrong your mother. She loves you like a child of her own, and she asked me repeatedly if I thought you would answer her letters."

"She can ask as repeatedly as she pleases," sobbed the tomboy, "but I'm not going to do it. Tell her she can save herself that trouble and——"

"Keep still now, child; I declare we have to go; come, get your satchel and things. No, no," he laughed, when Fanny picked up her lapdog, "we must leave that pup behind; I'll have to see the principal first if it isn't against their rules."

"No, it isn't," said the tomboy, hugging her puppy all the harder; "they can't possibly be so mean as all that! Mr. Sanders told me it was a large, roomy house, and it would be funny if they couldn't find a corner for a little pet like this."

"I hope so, but we had better ask first, darling," insisted the squire; "we can't bring him there without their permission."

"Then I'm not going to go either," snapped Miss Wayward, putting down her basket, and her father had to yield, for fear of provoking another deluge of tears. But he shook his head and could not help wishing Brownie's family event had come off a few weeks later. In all probability the ladies at the college would take Fanny for a stable-girl.

In about a quarter of an hour father and tomboy reached the lodge-gate of a stately old brick house, three story, and surrounded by a park-like garden.

"Look, Fanny, what a pretty building," said the squire; "you will have no chance to get very homesick in a place like this."

"Pretty!" sneered Fanny; "I don't see where the prettiness of it comes in. It looks just like a big jail."

"You never saw a jail, child," laughed the squire, "or you would not talk such nonsense; this seems to have been some nobleman's mansion with a deer park, to judge from the size of the trees."

"Yes, and a high fence all around, so the deer cannot get back to the woods," pouted Fanny; "I'm going to be a prisoner here, I know that well enough."

"Let's go in, they must be waiting for us by this time," said the squire.

They mounted a flight of broad stone steps, and Fanny gave a start when her father pressed the bell-button, and the bell rang out like an alarm-signal.

A well-dressed girl opened the door, and the Maldens were ushered into the reception-room. The pupils were having their ten-o'clock recess, and three or four of them leaned over the banisters to have a peep at the newcomer.

Fanny felt ill at ease. She heard something like a titter, and was glad when the door closed. They

were alone yet, and after a look around the wainscoat walls and classic statues poor Fanny did begin to feel a misgiving about her dog. He was clearly out of place in this parlor, and she half-repented not having taken her father's advice. And just then the unfortunate little four-footer was getting restless, and struggled to get down on the floor. She turned pale at the thought of the probable consequences when she looked at the splendid carpet and the velvet ottomans.

And now the door opened, and Miss Reymar answered the squire's bow with a graceful courtesy, then stepped in and turned her steel gray eyes on the new pupil. Fanny had started back and clutched her father's arm.

A bright smile obliterated that stare of scrutiny. "Be welcome, dear," said the principal, taking Fanny's hand. "I hope you will soon feel at home here. What did you bring us there?" noticing the pup; "did your little dog follow you all this way?"

Fanny nudged her father. The decisive moment had come.

"It is one of her pets, Miss Reymar," said the squire; "we could not persuade her to leave him behind, and she thought you might possibly be kind

enough to—to let her keep him and permit us to pay something extra for his board and lodging.''

Miss Reymar smiled. It was the first time boarders of that species had entered her institute. ''I am sorry, Mr. Malden, to have to refuse our little girl's first request, but I hope she will be sensible enough to see my difficulty. We have thirty-five pupils, besides all the day girls, and I leave it to you if it would do to let them keep pets. Just imagine the menagerie concert! But now I think of it, we might compromise the matter and send her little dog to my brother's place, not more than a mile from here. He has children of his own that would be glad to take care of him, and Fanny could see him every week.''

Fanny turned red and her eyes filled with tears. ''Let's all go back home, then,'' she was going to say, but her father's hand was on her arm, and her mutinous remark shrank to an indistinct mutter. Perhaps the calm dignity of the principal helped to prevent an open rebellion. Like a queen she looked, in spite of her modest gray dress, and Fanny did not venture to meet her eye just then.

The squire burst out laughing. ''You are right, madam, and it's absurd we did not think of all that ourselves. I'm sure my girl will appreciate

the kindness of your offer, if you think your relatives would find room for this little sinner.''

Fanny shook her head. ''We are not going to give our dog away to strangers,'' she gulped. ''Let's take him away, and you take him home again, pa.''

The squire squirmed, but Miss Reymar proved equal to the occasion. ''That will be the best plan,'' said she kindly; ''children sometimes can see further ahead in such matters; it might make Fanny feel bad every time she has to take leave of her pet. Our servant girl can take him back to your hotel, if you wish.''

''No, I'm going to carry him back myself, ain't I, pa?'' said Fanny, hugging her treasure h: rder than ever.

''My dear child,'' said the principal, ''it is near noon now, and I would like you to stay, so I can introduce you to your playmates. Your papa may have business of his own and he knows we are going to take good care of you, don't you, Mr. Malden? Our experience has convinced us that it is much better to let a new pupil make herself at home with us at once, and not let her run to and fro and hang about the hotels.''

''No, no,'' cried Fanny, clinging to her father's

arm, "I'm not going to stay right away. I don't want to leave my father till he is ready to start back home!"

The squire felt uncomfortable and almost irritated at her violence, but once more Miss Reymar came to the rescue.

"Just as you please, child," said she quietly. "May I then ask you to take dinner with us, Mr. Malden?"

Fanny turned an imploring look at her father, but he thought it best to accept the invitation. Miss Reymar touched a bell and asked the servant to call Miss Gunther.

"She's our head teacher," explained the principal, "and besides has special charge of the girls' rooms. Her parents live in Allenton, I think, not more than three miles from Fanny's home."

"Miss Gunther? Oh, to be sure, I've met her before," said the squire; "her father used to be a real estate agent and sometimes called at my office on business. I saw his girl ride a lady's pony when she was not more than ten years old."

"Miss Gunther, Mr. Malden," said the principal when the teacher stepped in, fair and bright, holding out both her hands to the new pupil. Squire Malden rose and greeted his fair countrywoman

with respectful cordiality, and she, too, sparkled with delight at meeting an old neighbor; and they at once proceeded to an exchange of county news. All this while Miss Gunther held on to the new comer's hand.

"Take her up to her room now, please," said the principal, "she wants to get rid of her hat and have a chat with her roommate."

"Come on, dear," said Miss Gunther; "I want to show you where you are going to sleep. It's a nice, bright room, and you won't be alone; when I heard we were going to have a little neighbor of mine, I picked you out the very best girl in the house, Nellie Holden; she was born in Denmark, and talks like a foreigner yet, but you might hunt a year before you could find a kinder soul."

They had half-ascended a flight of broad stairs, and Fanny wondered if the building had not been originally used for a convent. The corridors were arched and all the hall windows gleamed with stained glass.

"You can tell Mr. Hartman if that dog troubles you," the principal called up from the reception-room; "tell him to put him in the stable for a little while, or in the servants' room."

"Never mind," whispered Miss Gunther, when

Fanny gave a groan of dismay; "he won't bother you or me, will he?" tickling the pup's neck. "Are you so very fond of him?"

"He's the best little pet you ever saw," pouted Fanny, "and they won't let me keep him."

"Don't fret, dear; you'll find better playmates before the end of this week. You will be surprised how soon they'll make you forget that little yowler. We have girls of all ages, and I'm sure some of them will just suit you. Have you any sisters of your own?"

"No, nor a brother, either," said Fanny; "I'm all alone, Miss Gunther."

"There! Didn't I tell you? That's the reason you brought such playmates along. But you could have saved yourself that trouble."

They had reached the head of the stairs and turned to the right, into a spacious corridor with rooms left and right, as in a hotel.

"Here we are," said Miss Gunther, opening one of the doors and ushering Fanny into a large room, overlooking the tree garden. One of the windows was open, and a big apple tree mellowed the sunlight with its pale-green foliage.

It was a bright room, but plainly furnished; two

beds, two presses, a large washstand, a writing table, and three or four chairs.

"We have no carpet in here yet," said Miss Gunther half-apologetically; "but you'll have one after awhile, and some pictures, too."

"Oh, that's all right," laughed the tomboy; "I do hate rooms where you can't stir for fear of spoiling something or breaking some crazy knick-knacks."

Half-hidden by the head of the bed a girl of sixteen or seventeen years had been reading at the corner window, but she now rose and advanced with a graceful courtesy.

"Here's your roommate, Nell," said Miss Gunther; "I'm sure you will like one another; and you can't afford to quarrel; this is the best room in the house."

"Oh, sure, I'm going to love him quite much," said the flaxen-haired girl, putting down her book and kissing Fanny's hand. "You rely on me love with all my might, Miss Gunder."

Fanny smiled and thought the girl's conduct a little strange. She ought to have kissed her cheek or just shaken hands, but perhaps she was a poor girl, or that might be the Danish way of greeting a friend. At all events Fanny could not help liking

her gentle eyes and the childlike artlessness of her funny expressions.

"And little dog? It's going to live here, too?" asked Nellie.

"No, he just came to see us and say good-by," said Miss Gunther.

"What the pity! Such sweetest animal!" patting the pup's head.

Fanny began to feel more at home. She was sure she could never quarrel with that Danish girl, and a sort of dread darted over her mind that they might get too fond of one another and something would happen to part them. She had learned to mistrust the tricks of fate.

"We'll be back directly," said Miss Gunther. "Come this way, pet; I'm going to show you our music hall, and the big assembly-room. In which class do you think they will put you?" she asked, as they turned into another corridor.

Fanny made no reply, but stared about, left and right, with the wild, anxious eyes of a deer dragged into a cattle-pen or outlandish menagerie. It was certainly a fine building, and much larger than she had thought; but not homelike at all; more like a nunnery, or papa's courthouse with no end of doors and offices.

"Do you think they'll put you in the first class?" resumed Miss Gunther, who really seemed to take a personal interest in her old neighbor's daughter. "You look tall enough for a girl of eighteen years, and you can soon help me teach my class if you keep growing. Did you bring any of your copy-books along? In languages you will perhaps beat us all; your papa wrote you had an English governess and two French ones."

A bell rang through the house, probably the first dinner-bell, and Fanny secretly rejoiced at the interruption. She somehow felt that this young lady was trying to be proud of her, and might be shocked at the shortcomings of her attainments.

"I had so many different teachers I hardly know where they will put me here," said she at last; "and I know I make blunders in writing French; but I could talk it like a parrot before I was eight years old."

"Well, never mind," said Miss Gunther; "we mustn't worry you too much the first day; there will be time enough to settle all that to-morrow. But when the teachers do meet I want you to do your very best," she whispered, "my little Allenton girl mustn't let any one get ahead of her if I can help it. But let's go down now; dinner is ready."

They found Miss Reymar in the dining-room telling the squire about their home rules and customs. Newcomers always got the seat next to the principal at dinner, and every week two of the pupils were detailed to assist the waiter and sometimes the cook, to give them an insight into the mysteries of housekeeping. They acted the part of supervisors, too, and had to see to it that the dishes and things were properly cleaned and nothing missing. One or the other of the boarders had to say grace every day; but those who were too modest were never urged to do that till they had been a year or two in the elocution class.

"This is the most sensible institute I ever saw or ever heard of," said the squire; "accept my compliments, Miss Reymar, you have certainly mastered the art of making your boarders feel at home. I've kept my eyes open and haven't seen one sullen face thus far.

Miss Reymar was pleased with her visitor. "I'm glad you came along, Mr. Malden, said she, handing the squire a copy of her "Rules and Regulations;" "if you look at that you will see that we are trying to make our place something more than a lodging-house for girl students. Some of our girls have got so used to us that they ask to stay

over at vacations, and we never refuse them that request. A few of the foreigners have to remain anyhow, and we arrange picnics and little mountain excursions to give them a chance to enjoy themselves."

Dinner consisted of three courses, with several dishes that would have done credit to the *chef* of a first-class hotel; but Mr. Malden noticed the absence of wine and coffee; there were no strong-spiced viands either; the *menu* seemed to have been selected on the plan of a modern health-resort. Fanny only noticed the dress of the girls that were helping the waiter that day. They were tripping about with boards holding a dozen plates, and wore those obnoxious aprons that had excited her misgivings in Allenton. She had teased her father into permission to carry her darling puppy, and when they rose to go the little Danish girl darted upstairs and swiftly returned with Fanny's hat and gloves.

"That's Miss Holden; she's going to be my roommate," whispered Fanny. The squire, too, liked that girl at first sight.

"Much obliged, Miss Holden," said he, when Nellie had followed them to the door; "please try to get along with my little tomboy."

"Oh, I get him soon," smiled Nellie; then touch-

ing Fanny's arm, "don't stay long, Fan, I watch for you from window."

"What a good girl!" said the squire when they stepped out of the lodge gate; "she is a foreigner, isn't she?"

"Yes, Danish or Swedish, I think," said Fanny; "but don't you like the way she talks? She reminds me of that little Savoyard orphan boy that stayed at our house one night."

"I'm glad you are coming to your senses, pet," said the squire, greatly pleased at the abatement of his tomboy's tantrums. "I really think Mr. Sanders could not have recommended us a better place; I like their arrangements better than anything of the kind I ever saw."

But he had exulted too soon. "I don't then," pouted Fanny; "the house looks like a convent, and I just hate the looks of that principal—mean old thing; wouldn't let me keep my poor little doggy," giving her pup a sly kiss. "I'm fond of that Danish girl, that's all."

"Don't you like Miss Gunther?" asked the squire, —"that head teacher, or vice-principal, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot," said Fanny naively; "yes, she's just lovely. Say, pa, you must call on her

folks when you get back, and tell them you saw her—that's what she asked me when she combed my hair for dinner. Her father is dead, she told me, poor thing. I wish they were all like her, but——''

''Now, pet, be sensible,'' expostulated her father; ''we haven't been there more than three hours, and how can you tell about the rest of the teachers? If you expect me to write every week and call you my own dear girl, I want you to tell me the truth before I go now, and say if you don't just think it possible you might like that place, after all?''

He turned to watch her face, but she avoided his eye.

''Well, yes—perhaps,'' she muttered at last.

''That's right, and now let me have your puppy,'' stopping at a fruit-shop; ''I want you to carry back a basket of oranges and pears for your little roommate and teachers. Won't that be a good plan?''

''Yes, put in a little candy, too—that's what girls like; but—Miss Reymar isn't going to get one bit of this,'' with a decided remnant of hostility.

''Now, then, do you think you can find your way back alone?''

Fanny made no reply, but put down her basket and pressed her sleeve to her eyes. ''I am not going yet, pa,'' she sobbed; ''I can carry this bas-

ket and the puppy too, but please, please, let me go back with you as far as the hotel."

"What for, pet?"

"Because—" with another sob.

That was a girl's reason. Did it mean that she had not yet given up the hope of changing her father's mind?

"Why, darling, you might lose your way; better be reasonable now, and go back while we are on the same street."

The reply came in the form of a crying fit.

"Well, come along, then," said the squire, but the floodgate of tears could not be stopped at once, and Fanny marched along, crying on the public street like a mischievous youngster that is going to be arraigned for his misdeeds.

And when they did reach the hotel matters showed no prospect of mending. "I'm going to run away in spite of them, if they don't treat me right," sobbed Fanny when the hostler announced the coach ready; "they can't keep me like a slave, I'll tell them that much," clinging to a big easy-chair, as the only soft-hearted friend in sight, till the squire had almost to carry her out in the street.

"I'm going to call a hack," said he, "so you won't lose your way."

"Oh, I can walk," said the tomboy defiantly, when she saw that the last chance was gone; "I'm not in such an awful hurry to get back there."

"But it's nearly a mile!"

"Is she going to the college?" asked an old lady who had made a purchase at a neighboring shop; "I live within a square of Miss Reymar's; you can come with me, child; I'll take you where you are in sight of their building."

"All right, come on, then," said Fanny, choking down her tears; and actually stalked away without turning her head or kissing her father a last farewell.

CHAPTER IV.

When Fanny reached the lodge-gate of the college she stopped, and looked up and down the garden roads; but the only human being in sight was an old gardener with a wheelbarrow full of sods. He paid no attention to her, and Fanny slowly approached the veranda, casting an anxious glance at the windows above the old apple tree. "Why doesn't that Danish girl keep her word?" she muttered to herself; "I hate to ring that bell, but I suppose I'll have to do it."

She had already one foot on the steps when she felt somebody touch her arm. Nellie Holden had kept her word, and seemed to have slipped around the house from some other door.

"Come on your tiptoes," she whispered; "I show you way for our room where no one stop her."

"What a good girl," thought Fanny, and followed her friend to a little conservatory with an inner door close to the foot of a flight of back stairs.

"Now, here," tittered Nellie, when she had taken a

peep into the main corridor and found the coast clear; "you just come so right time; they all are in their rooms, sweeping floor. Here we got nice now."

She opened the door of the apple-tree room and pulled her friend in, then swiftly and noiselessly closed the door. "Your father gone?" she inquired, "and poor little dog?"

"Yes, they are on their way home," said Fanny, patting her friend's shoulder by way of expressing her gratitude; "how did you know I wanted to slip in and make no noise, you clever thing, you?"

"Oh, me knows things," said Nellie, smiling; "I look at person's face and know what's on one inside. Now let's put all your things so they belong."

"All right," said Fanny; "you show me how."

"Give me key then—keys for trunk and littlest trunk."

"Here they are—turn that trunk-key to the right, after you press it in."

But Nellie had already got the trunk open.

"Oh, such a pretty things, such pretty thing," cried she again and again, as she pulled out the contents of the trunk. "Look at big handkerchief with name on, and fringed apron—isn't that good? who put yours name on all things? Can you stitch?"

"My mother, I suppose," said Fanny, yawning. "I don't like that apron at all."

"You will need him," said Nellie, "if you like or no; but your mother is quite good."

"No, she isn't," muttered Fanny.

Nellie stared. "I would be glad, I know," said she, "if I have mother to make me pretty things."

"Is your mother dead?"

"Ah me, yes, long, long dead," said the girl; "she die when I was baby like this—" holding her hand about two feet above the floor. And my father, he die, too; I'm all alone now."

"Poor Nellie, poor Nellie;" taking the orphan's hand; "but sisters — have you no sisters or brothers?"

"Not one at all," said Nellie; "nothing but my old uncle, who pay my board here till they are done with teaching me all, and then, when they are done I have to go and be a governess."

"A governess!" cried Fanny, horrified; "why! you are not much older than I am; I thought only old maids could get a place of that sort."

"Oh, that comes because the young ones they marry," laughed Nellie; "but it's other thing with me; I'm so poor; no one like poor girl."

"Then let me be your friend," said Fanny,

greatly touched. "I have no brother and sister either, and—not much of a mother."

"One little mother is better as no at all," said Nellie; "but you can have me for friend, so long you want; I'm glad you came here."

She put her arms around Fanny's neck and drew her down on her bed. "You be good, won't you?" she whispered, "not get mad to me and not hit me some more, will you?"

"Hit you?" said Fanny, "what do you mean? Do you suppose I would do such a thing?"

"The last one did," said Nellie, "the big girl that went away last week; I was scared of her, when she get mad."

"Was she much bigger than you?"

Nellie nodded her head. "She was as stout as one mule."

"Poor girl!" cried Fanny, "no wonder you were glad she left; I don't see how she ever could get up a quarrel with a sweetheart like you! Just look how nice you unpacked that trunk and put everything in order."

"Now little trunk," said Nellie; "give me key."

"Never mind; I'll do that myself, "said Fanny, remembering the way she had crammed in her knickknacks.

"No, you don't know," said Nellie, twisting the valise out of her hands; "let me try—wait, I get him open."

"Now you let that alone," flared up Miss Tomboy; "I told you once, and that's enough!"

"Oh, my!" cried Nellie, with comically feigned fright, "you promise me one minute ago and now you get mad to me already! Such a big eyes!"

Fanny burst out laughing. "You are right," she said; "I came near breaking my word—but nobody can quarrel with you long, anyhow. Yes, you shall see my things—that is, if you promise not to tell."

Nellie put her finger across her lips. "Not one soul," she whispered. "Oh, is that where you keep key?"

But just then the bell rang for supper.

"Oh, what strong pity! Now we have to wait till after we go in bed!"

"Won't that be a worse time than now?" asked Fanny.

Again Nellie put her finger to her lips. "Him is my secret; hush you now and come to supper."

Fanny was ushered to the seat next to the principal, and her other neighbor was Orla Sassuwitch, a biggish Russian girl with a pug nose and short-

cut hair, but a pair of fine oriental eyes. She was seventeen years, but looked older, and could talk several languages as fluently as a dragoman.

Fanny would have preferred to sit near her friend but poor Nell's place was near the end of the table. Just now she was standing near a sideboard to help serve the tea and sandwiches. "Perhaps that's how the poor thing pays part of her board," thought Fanny; still it was a pretty sight to see the nimble little ladies skip to and fro with their snow-white aprons. Large platters with butter and ham sandwiches were already standing in a row.

"Help yourself, child, and pass it on to your neighbor," said the principal.

Fanny was hungry. At breakfast and dinner she had to fight down her tears, but now nature asserted her rights. She took four slices at once, consolidated them two and two and made short work of the whole supply. She then reached across the table, collared another installment, and leaned back in her chair to sip her tea at leisure. At home she had often carried her supper to the barn and eaten it in a rafter-swing where she could throw handfuls of crumbs to her pet chickens.

Miss Reymar had been talking to a teacher and never noticed Fanny's conduct till she heard the

furtive tittering of two little vixens across the table: Melanie and Peggie Swartz, twins from Frankfort-on-the-Main, who seemed to enjoy the newcomer's performances like a free circus.

Her frown made them desist for a moment, but their suppressed merriment now vented itself in sputters, and Melanie was seized with a choking fit.

"Won't you have another slice, Fanny?" asked the principal.

Fanny nodded assent. She had only begun enjoying her supper, and proceeded to help herself more liberally than before. She had discovered a saucer with jelly behind the cream can and proved that sweetness can be added to a slice of sugar-cured ham.

"That thing can eat like a bear," whispered Melanie Swartz; "just watch her—there!—down goes another chunk."

Peggie had a choking fit this time and had to snatch up her napkin to muffle the explosion.

After supper the girls were turned loose in the tree garden.

"Come on, Fanny, friend," said Nell, taking her roommate's hand; "but—hold on, see how you forget about napkin! Where's your ring?"

"What do you mean?" asked Fanny; "don't the

servants attend to such things? There!'' seizing her napkin and pulling it through the ring happy-go-lucky.

''You don't know,'' said Nellie quietly, ''watch me now—see? Fold him up like this, and then ring. That's the way to do.''

''Heavens help me! Don't you people go to a lot of trouble!'' laughed the tomboy; ''what have you got your servants for?''

''Never mind now, come in garden,'' said Nellie, and she lugged her friend along. ''So many good trees!''

It was really a fine garden, though not nearly so large as the Allenton park, where a stranger could lose his way in the wildering thickets. All the trees and half the bushes were trimmed here, and there were several fine arbors of copper beeches and honeysuckles. Instead of deer-trails they had broad gravel paths with rich grass on each side. Beyond the quickset hedge there was another garden, or orchard, revealing glimpses of a range of blue mountains and wooded foothills.

Nellie showed her all the playground facilities, the swings, the horizontal bar, the little pond and fountain, the black glass globe that reflected objects like a looking-glass, but all awry, making a person's

face look like a flat potato, with a shark mouth and goggle eyes.

At last Nellie took her to an old linden tree with a ring-bench where you could lean back and rest as in an easy-chair, and have shade all the day long. "Isn't that good, now," said Nellie; "here we go in dinner recess and in evening when we want to make up our secrets. That old tree hears them all, but he never tell," she laughed, pushing down Fanny in a reserved seat where somebody had nailed a leather cushion against the stem of the tree.

Fanny began to feel at home, though not more than six hours ago she had seriously meditated a scheme to run away on some moonlight night and get back to Allenton by following the pike road.

"Halloo, Blue Eyes!" the twins called across the lawn; "have you seen anything of the butterfly catcher? There is a regular swarm of night butterflies around this jessamine bush."

"You find it in tool-house, I guess," Nellie called back; "I saw the gardener pick it up on the gravel road this morning."

"That's the Swartz girls," explained Nellie; "the one same as sit across you on supper-table."

"Yes, I know," said Fanny; "what was it they called you? Is that your nickname?"

"Him's all I got," chuckled Blue Eyes; "some of them got three or four; they are so funny to look at."

"Say, who's that big girl that was next to me this evening?" inquired Fanny.

"Her with the short hair and eyeglass? That's Orla," said Nellie, "and then she got other name, but too long for anybodies to remember. Oh, but she's smart! We're all some little scared of her, she always says truth and right in your face."

"Well, isn't that the right way?"

"Yes, you think so if it tickle you," said Nellie; "but you talk different when it hit across their noses. If I tell Orla she beat some teacher talking she likes me all right, but she would hit me if I tell she has been smoking. And that would be truth, too; I have peeped in her keyhole and see all blue with smoke."

"Look! there's something moving in that willow tree," said Fanny, whose eyes had been wandering all over the garden; "is there a bench under there, too?"

Nellie stood up to scrutinize the phenomenon.

"Oh, I know," said she; "that's Flora—Flora Hooppole—oh, but she make poetry; come on, let's see her and have some fun."

Fanny was right; it was another ring-bench, shaded by the boughs of a weeping willow. And there sat the poetess—a tall blonde, with a freckled face and a blue-covered copy-book. She was writing, and did not seem to have noticed the intruders.

"Let me introduce you to great poet," said Blue Eyes; "she can write verse all with rhyming at the last end."

Fanny stopped, half-afraid to speak and interrupt the occupation of the youthful prodigy. It was the first time she had met a poetess face to face.

"And she write novels, too," continued Nellie; "you never see such trouble! They all drown or break their hearts and fall down dead. Say, Flora, you better stop to write; it's getting dark and spoil your eyes."

"I do wish you would mind your own business," snapped the poetess, closing her copy-book; "I was just going to finish a lovely stanza, and now you made me drop a rhyme."

"Wait, I help find him," said Blue Eyes, stooping and sifting the dry leaves in search of lost valuables.

"Oh, go away, and don't make a fool of yourself," snarled Miss Flora, "you have no more poetry

about you than a cow; you can't even talk plain prose, yet.''

''That's true,'' laughed Blue Eyes. ''Come on, Fanny, don't make her some more mad, or she make verses on you.''

Two other girls passed the willow tree just then, and one of them seemed to have overheard Nellie's remark and came near falling in the grass with laughing.

''That's Annie Vanboden,''said Blue Eyes;''she's got nickname, too; we call her the Laughing Dove; everything starts her laughing, and she can make no end and make you laugh, too.''

About nine o'clock the bell rang again, and one by one the girls went to the principal's room to get their good-night kiss. Now and then one of them had to stay behind and be scolded; but they did not mind that much; Miss Reymar had a way of talking like a mother to her pet child.

''Take that chair, child; sit down a moment,'' said the principal, taking Fanny's hand; ''I should like to have a talk with you.''

''How old are you, Fanny?'' she asked when the last girl had left the room.

''Fifteen—I'll be sixteen next March.''

''And you never learned better manners yet? My

dear child, I wish you could have seen yourself at supper this evening, leaning back like a hired man after a threshing day, and shoving in sandwiches by the double handful. It made the girls titter all along the other side of the table. We are not so very strict here, but then a young lady should learn to behave herself a little bit anyhow; all you have to do is to watch your schoolmates. Don't take your teacup with both hands and lean on your elbows, and if you eat do it in a way that doesn't remind your neighbors of a menagerie; don't get your mouth so full that you would choke if you tried to talk. A child in the nursery might do such things, but then its mother calls it a piggy or a little greedy gobble."

Fanny had turned as red as fire with shame and rage. "I didn't know," she muttered, reaching for her pocket; "but I can pay you back if I ate too much."

"What — did — you — say?" inquired Miss Reymar, rising and advancing upon the offender. Perhaps she had really not understood her words, but she could not help having noticed the mutinous manner of the reply.

"I didn't know," Fanny began again, but she got no further that time.

Miss Reymar gave her plenty of time to proceed.

"Well, never mind," said she at last; "you can go now; good-night, child," reaching for Fanny's shoulder to draw her near enough for a kiss, but Miss Tomboy eluded her by stooping to pick up her hat and flounced out of the room.

She darted up the stairs and entered her own room, breathless and speechless with excitement. Down went her hat in one corner, down went her tippet in another, and without as much as a word of explanation she flung herself on her bed to sob out her grief to her pillow.

"Oh, the pity!" cried poor Nell, "what is? what happened?"

"I'm not going to stay in this place," burst out Fanny. "To-morrow I go back where I came from and let my father know how they treat me here!"

"Oh, my! what she do to you?"

No reply.

"What happened? All in so short time?"

No answer.

"Won't you talk to me?" putting her hand on Fanny's head. "Oh! how hot you are! what she do?"

"She called me a pig and a greedy snout," screamed Fanny, picking up a little book and dash-

ing it violently against the door. "Yes, and she told me I ate too much—mean old, crazy thing; why don't they have a policeman around to watch you and snatch it out of your mouth if you eat a penny's worth too much?"

"Oh, she never mean *that*," said Nellie, stroking her friend's arm to smooth her ruffled feelings. "No, no, you not understood things yet; she mean very well, and maybe never scold you again. Be good now, and after Miss Gunther done look in we get up and open your littlest trunk."

"No, you won't," sobbed Fanny; "I'm going to write to my father to come and take me back."

"I won't let you write. Come, be good now," coaxed Blue Eyes; "if you go I'm all alone again, and no friend."

"If I stay I know what I'll do," gulped Fanny, boiling up projects with fever-speed; "I'll never eat another meal in this house; when my father left I walked back here with a kind old lady that told me she had been in Allenton often, and asked me to come and see her where she lives; there I can get something to eat, and I have money enough to buy me a loaf of bread from the baker. That's what I'll do, and let them keep their baby sandwiches, so they can't throw it in my teeth I eat too much."

"You get over that, by the by," said Nellie, noticing the gradual abatement of the storm-waves; "do you say prayers before you go in sleep?"

No reply.

"Good-night, then, Fan, friend," said Nellie, bending over to kiss her tomboy's flaming cheeks; "you get over that as soon as you go sleep."

But Fanny kept drenching her pillow with convulsive tears, and an hour after, when Miss Gunther made her rounds and softly opened the newcomer's door she heard her sobbing still.

"She's homesick, poor child," thought Miss Gunther.

Fanny's thoughts wandered back to Allenton, and the two lost opportunities for kissing her parents good-by. What would she have given now to retrieve that last mistake! Could she expect to be taken back after such an exhibition of heartlessness? She felt as if she had lost her old home without finding a new one, and again the burden of that old song echoed in her soul:

> "No room for Little Willie,
> In the world he had no part—"

and her tears streamed till at last she sobbed herself to sleep.

The dress-bell, as they called it, rang at six o'clock, and once more Fanny bitterly regretted the loss of her old home, where she could rise as early or as late as she pleased. In midsummer, when the song thrushes heralded the morning at three o'clock, she often got up four hours before breakfast and took long rambles through hills and woods, while the dew was yet on the grass; and in winter she had more than once slept till after eight, and dressed herself just in time to meet her tutor in the blackboard-room. She missed breakfast on such days, but what about that? The cupboards were always open and she could make out a liberal lunch at recess.

"Get up, Fan," said Nellie; "there's coffee at half-past six."

"Oh, dear, and I'm so tired yet," yawned Fanny.

"Get up once; you'll soon be wide awake," urged Blue Eyes; "you mustn't be late first morning."

Nellie was already ready dressed and had put her bed and things in order, when Fanny at last sat up, rubbing her eyes in a drowsy way.

"Oh, dear! Hurry! Only ten minutes now! Come, quick, let me help dress; have you comb?"

Fanny pointed to the window. "There's every-

thing wrapped up in that paper; please get me my comb and my looking-glass.''

''You need pocket,'' said Blue Eyes; ''but never mind now—quick, button your shoes, while I tie up hair; now come—'' dragging her to the washstand, where she proceeded to sponge her tear-stained checks without more ado.

''Your my big baby,'' she laughed. ''Don't get mad now, just come quick, and all go good yet.''

The second bell did ring, just as Nellie fastened her friend's apron.

''Didn't I tell?'' she chuckled; ''I saved you one scolding, now quick.''

She took her hand and danced her out in the hall, and downstairs in time to enter the breakfast-room with the first comers. The principal took breakfast in her own room, and Miss Gunther beckoned Nellie to her side.

''You are my own girl now,'' she whispered. ''I'm glad you came in time.''

CHAPTER V.

FANNY proved that she had profited by Miss Reymar's lesson, and nibbled her biscuit like a pet white mouse. If the principal had been present Miss Tomboy would very likely have declined to touch her breakfast at all; as it was, she just touched it enough to oblige Miss Gunther, but she overdid things and sipped her coffee like a boy drinking lemonade through a straw. Presently the twins started tittering again, but Fanny continued her performance, till Orla Sassuwitch touched her hand. "You're treating us to a regular concert—don't you," said she, more than loud enough to answer the purpose of a neighborly attention. "Do you always do like that? If you think it's pretty you are mistaken."

Fanny at once put down her cup and rose to leave the room.

"What made you talk to her in that way, Orla?" said Miss Gunther, hurrying to the door to recapture the deserter. She overtook her at the garden gate.

"Where are you going, dear?" she inquired; "what got in your head? That's no way to jump up and run off without permission! And my own girl, too," she added, "my own little Allenton girl, playing me such a trick the first day! Come back now and finish your breakfast."

"I'm done eating," growled the tomboy, "and I'm not going back to be insulted and laughed at. They're mistaken if they suppose I came here to be bullied by every pug-snouted——"

"Hush, now, hush," said Miss Gunther, putting her arm around her spitfire's head in time to prevent the completion of her remark; "you cannot be in your right senses, child, or you would not talk like that to me. In this world friends are too scarce to be spurned for a whim, and you know very well that I am your friend—or trying my best to be, under difficulties."

Fanny looked helplessly this way and that, her face began to work, and presently she burst out crying, and permitted her teacher to lead her back like a wayward child.

"I know you didn't mean all that," said Miss Gunther kindly; "but after this, dear, you must make it a rule to think a little before you talk or do things."

Fanny felt like a criminal on the way to the pillory, and drew a sigh of relief when they found the breakfast-room deserted. The girls had returned to their rooms.

"Come, it's our turn now," said the kind teacher, handing her captive a plate of warm buckwheat cakes; "we mustn't miss that, anyhow. Oh, and I nearly forgot: Miss Reymar wants to take a look at your copy-books, and this morning you are going to be examined. It's just seven o'clock now; come down about eight, and you will find all the teachers in the lecture hall."

"Are they—are they all going to examine me?" stammered Fanny.

"Not now, but they will be present when Miss Reymar asks you a few questions on every main subject. After awhile I'll come to let you know in what class you are going to be, and to-morrow you will attend school for the first time. Don't you forget now what I told you yesterday; I don't want you to go in the baby-class, and there will be no risk of that if you'll keep your wits about you."

Fanny went to her room to hunt up her copy-books. They were a sorry set; half-finished and turned into scrap-picture galleries, some of them, and others so soaked with ink-blots that the writing

could hardly be made out for two lines together. Even grease spots added variety to the view. Often and often Fanny had missed her breakfast by getting up too late, and then pulled out a piece of pork sausage while her blear-eyed governess was standing at the window cleaning her spectacles. Fanny's sins had come home to roost now, and on one page of her French lesson-book there was a grease splotch as large as a fig-leaf, with a sprinkling of little ones, like a brood hen with a lot of chickens.

That would never do, and after a furtive peep at the door, Fanny tore out those poultry-yard pictures and stuffed the leaves behind her washstand.

There came steps along the hall, and in danced Blue Eyes to stroke her friend's face with a sprig of jessamine.

"Is that where you hides?" she laughed, "I look for you in garden and thought you ran away back to Allenton. What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to straighten out these crazy old copy-books," said Fanny frankly; "I had no idea they would want to see them."

"Let me have, I help," said Nellie, turning the assortment over and over; then went to her drawer and took out a roll of sky-blue wrapping paper and a pair of scissors.

"What are you doing?" inquired Miss Tomboy.

"Dress your books like I dress you this morning," laughed Nellie, "they look like they got mix with butter sandwich."

"Never mind; they're good enough the way they are," said Fanny; "if they don't like them they needn't look at them. No, you don't," she snapped when Nellie tried to fit her arithmetic with a new overcoat; "leave that alone, now."

"Get mad again? Now you sit on bed, or I call Orla to hold you and makes you behave," laughed Blue Eyes; "you're my bad boy and not knows things at all. There now! doesn't that look more better? Sit still now, bad boy, you."

Fanny had to submit. It was impossible to pick a quarrel with that girl; and Miss Tomboy felt ashamed of herself for having tried it again. "I don't see how you can keep your temper like that, Blue Eyes, " said she naively.

"Oh, you gets sensible, too," laughed Nellie; "no ones can be crazy all the times."

At eight o'clock Fanny went down to the lecture hall, and found the board of examiners in full session. There were five of them, Miss Reymar presiding.

"Come in, child," said the principal kindly;

"here we are, and I see you remembered the right time. Sit down here, and let us see your copy-books, to begin with. What's this? German compositions?"

"Y—es, I suppose so," said Fanny doubtfully; "my governess used to call it the essay-book."

"That's just as good, and shorter," laughed Professor Althoff, the senior of the faculty, "and—" after a rapid perusal of the text—"it's really not a misnomer, it seems; you are quite an essayist—if you did write it all yourself?"—with a gleam of suspicion.

"Oh, yes, every word of it," said the tomboy authoress with gratified pride; "but that's nothing; I could beat that hollow."

Miss Reymar frowned. "What an expression, child! Do better than that, you meant; no matter how clever you are there is no excuse for slang."

"Nor for such spelling, Miss Genius," said Professor Althoff; "just look here, will you—'sleapy;' you must have been half-asleep yourself when you wrote that; and here—steeling for stealing; you wanted to make sure, I suppose, that nobody would steal those essays and pass them off for his own."

Fanny burst out laughing. She could stand that sort of banter all day long, and ask for more. She

liked that Herr Althoff, so quickwitted and sprightly and so unlike her solemn old governess.

"I was just putting on steam to get done, I suppose," said she gayly; "I could wrestle all those words with one hand tied behind my back."

"Oh, Fanny, Fanny, where have you been?" protested Miss Reymar; "did you go out hay-making with your father's hired folks?"

"Lots of times," said Miss Tomboy with admirable frankness. Professor Althoff was leaning back in his chair and studying the newcomer like some rare zoological specimen.

"Have you ever tried to talk the way you write, Miss Malden?" he inquired, with another glance at the composition book.

"The reason I ask," said he, "is that some of your compositions are really clever; so you seem to know the difference between proper and improper language."

"Well, I could talk like that, I suppose," said Fanny; "but then—you know——"

"Know I don't."

Fanny tittered. "I mean folks would——"

"Would what?"

"Well, you know they would take you for a fool or a mollycoddle."

"A—what?"

"A hypocrite," said Fanny after some reflection.

"I thought so," said the professor. "According to that you imagined that only hypocrites mince their words and that whole-souled people spout slang left and right?"

"No, but they are not so awful particular," laughed Fanny.

"Just a little particular anyhow, let us say?"

"Yes—that would be all right."

"Good. We will agree after awhile, I can see that," said the professor. "Because I hate hypocrites as much as you do, and affectations in conversation make me sick. Yes, we shall agree altogether, I know, after you once find out that there is something between slang and stilted language."

"How are you getting along in French?" asked Miss Reymar.

"I can speak it, I believe," said Fanny, beginning to mistrust the competence of her Allenton governess, who had often praised her excellent spelling.

A weazen-faced little foreigner rose from his seat by way of asserting his casting vote on this special question. "Mademoiselle Gunther, me dit que vous le parlez comme une Française de naissance?" he inquired.

"Mais oui, c'est a dire comme perroquet gascon," laughed Fanny, "ma bonne etait Provençale."

Monsieur Miquard bowed with the grace of a dancing-master and resumed his seat. Miss Gunther is right," he said.

In geography she answered half a dozen questions with almost equal readiness, but in history she struck several snags; her chronological memory had always been poor.

"When did Napoleon win the battle of Marengo?" inquired Professor Miller.

"A little after the French revolution?" rather dubiously.

"Well, yes. And when did the French revolution begin?"

"Let me see—soon after the death of Frederick the Great."

"You don't know the year?"

Fanny shook her head.

"Can you tell us who was the father of Frederick the Great?"

"Oh, yes—you mean that old bulldozer that knocked down people on the street and made his children eat wurst and sauerkraut?"

Professor Miller smiled. "You have a memory for striking facts, I see."

"That will do now," said Miss Reymar; "you can go now, child; we'll let you know what we can do with you."

"She will cause us trouble, I'm afraid," said the principal when Miss Tomboy was gone; "with all her forwardness she cannot stand the slightest reproof."

"But she's not a bad girl," said Miss Gunther; "only wild and unused to restraint. One other explanation of her peculiarities is the way she has been brought up, in a free-and-easy country house, without a mother's care, and with no playmates of her own age."

"That does explain many things," remarked Professor Althoff; "she is certainly an exceptional youngster; a sort of wayward boy in petticoats; but still with the sensitiveness of a young girl. In some respects she is ahead of her age; four out of five children are so embarrassed by the presence of strangers that they are afraid to say a word; even boys betray that sort of stage-fright before a committee of examiners; but this girl seems to have all her wits about her the moment she gets interested or amused. About progress in her studies there will not be much trouble, if we put her in the second class to begin with."

"Zis time permeet me to dissent," said Monsieur Miquard, "ze progress she can make in a second class would be very small in French; she talks preety near well enough to teach ze class herself."

After a brief debate the committee decided to put Fanny in the second class and let her attend the first class in French.

"She will be at the head of her class in a short time," predicted Miss Gunther.

"I hope you are right," said the principal; "with management and patience we can perhaps bring her to her senses in the course of time."

That time, however, seemed still a long way off. At dinner, only a few hours after her bright *début* in the lecture hall, Fanny furnished another proof of her reckless temper.

She held her fork so short that the tips of her fingers almost touched the plate, and had no hesitation in eating vegetables with her knife; and so hot that now and then her hand had to come to the assistance of her lips. She stooped, too, and had a trick of diving after morsels that threatened to give her fork the slip.

"Sit straight, child," said the principal; "it isn't healthy to stoop like an engraver poring over a copperplate."

"I always eat like that," said the tomboy.

"Did eat, you mean. Here you will have to try a different plan. Did they let you eat like that in Allenton?"

"Yes, I told you," snapped Miss Tomboy; "I didn't always get home in time for dinner, but what there was they let me eat in peace anyhow."

"Oh—and you suppose I find fault just to make trouble?"

Fanny made no reply.

"Did you hear what I asked you? Put down that knife now and answer my question."

Fanny promptly dropped her knife and pushed away her plate. She even gave a look at the door as if she had more than half a mind to jump up and bolt.

"What's the matter with you? Are you sick?"

"Yes, I'm sick of this kind of life," muttered Miss Spitfire.

Thus far the conversation had been carried on in an undertone, but girls are quick at physiognomy, and the twins had overheard a word or two and were watching the progress of the row. "Sit still now, Fanny," whispered Miss Reymar; "after dinner you can go to your room and lie down if you do not feel well."

Fanny took the hint and did not come down to supper that evening, but about half an hour after she stole down on tiptoes and joined Nellie in the garden.

"That new girl has been crying again and mussed up her bed," reported the servant girl, who had been making the rounds with a basketful of clean towels.

Miss Gunther went up to Fanny's room. Yes, Bridget was right, there were shoe marks on the tomboy's bed and her pillow was drenched with tears again. The chairs had been pushed close to the window, and on the writing-table a lot of assorted pencils lay scattered about a large drawing-book or album.

Was Fanny an artist, too, and had been seeking relief in pencil sketches?

Miss Gunther opened the book. It was Fanny's diary. For a moment the teacher hesitated. Had she a right to pry into the private memoranda of her little friend? But suppose that friend should happen to be a little more than half-crazy and to have been meditating flight?

Duty for once seemed to second the promptings of curiosity, and the first pencil entry appeared to confirm Miss Gunther's misgivings:

"'They won't have me here long if this keeps on; that mean old thing is trying to run me off, the way she acts. Maybe she's afraid I might eat too much, but I know what I'll do, I'll write home for a lot of grub, and eat my real meals here in my room, when no one is watching.'

"You relieve me," thought Miss Gunther.

"'And if they make me come down to dinner, I'll sit as straight as if I had swallowed a poker and just cut chicken feed with my knife while the rest are eating.'

"'But suppose pa won't send me nothing? *She* is trying to set him against me, I know, and she's got things all her own way now. Joe might do it if I only knew where to write.'

"Who's Joe, I wonder?" tittered Miss Gunther.

"'But if they catch him at it she will run him off. Uncle Philip has no children of his own, but he hasn't been to see us since ma is dead.'"

Then the diarist broke into poetry, or poetic quotations:

"'In the day we wandered foodless,
Little Willie cried for bread,
In the night we wandered homeless,
Little Willie cried for bed.

Parted at the workhouse door,
Not a word we said;
Oh, so tired was poor Willie,
And so sweetly sleep the dead.

"'In the midst of winter,
They laid him in the earth,
The world brought in the New Year
In a tide of mirth:
But for lost little Willie
Not a tear we crave;
Cold and hunger cannot wake him,
In his workhouse grave.
Poor little Willie! Not a friend was nigh,
When on the cold ground he crouched down to die.

"'No room for little Willie,
In the world he had no part;
On him stared the gorgon eye
Through which looks no heart
Come to me, said Heaven,
And if Heaven will save
Little matters if the door
Be a workhouse grave.'"

Then, with a sudden return to absolute prose:

"'Wonder if Nellie could find some kid to run down town and buy me a snack of cheese and crackers.'"

Miss Gunther burst out laughing, and had to struggle with a temptation to take a copy for the benefit of Professor Althoff. It would have kept him chuckling for a month, she knew. But then he could not be relied upon to keep a secret, and on second thought Miss Gunther concluded to forbear.

CHAPTER VI.

"ARE you asleep, Fan?" asked Nellie about half an hour after the lights had been put out and the front door barred.

"No, what is it?"

"Put on cloth, and let's unpack your littlest trunk now."

"Now? Why, it's pitch dark!"

"Oh, never you mind. I'll make light."

Softly and noiselessly Nellie screened the two windows and then took a coiled wax-candle from a nook of her drawer and struck a match on the floor.

"Why, that's clever!" laughed Miss Tomboy with a quick appreciation of the chance for fun; "where did you get that?"

"I tell after I see your secrets," whispered Blue Eyes; "quick now, give me key."

"Here it is," said Fanny; "wait, let me see that; you don't know how to open that lock."

Nellie held the candle, but looked disappointed

when the secrets of the little trunk began to unfold themselves, piece by piece.

"What? No cake at all?" she asked, pulling out another unlaundered gown and rummaging the trunk for its bottom contents.

"Ouch! What's him?" she cried, snatching back her hand and giving her finger a suck; "something stung me, you keep snake in there? or pet squirrel?"

"No, nothing but my frog," said Fanny; "but I don't think he would—hold that candle, please."

"Oh, dear! the glass broke!" she wailed; "my poor pet's housie is gone!"

"That old glass pricked me," said Blue Eyes; "what make you put such things in there?"

"Wait—where is—he's dead," said Fanny, with something like a sob. "Look here," holding up a little leathery object; "he came out and got pressed flat, poor, sweet thing! It looks like I can't keep a pet; I don't know what broke this glass, unless somebody stamped on it, just for meanness. And they wouldn't let me keep my doggie, after I got him here alive; I wouldn't have let *him* die, I know; maybe they were afraid he'd eat too much. But this little thing could have lived on flies and crumbs."

"Never mind," said Nellie, "you and me buries him to-morrow and put a sign on his grave and say he die from one kick."

"And look, my birdie got mussed up, too; the wing is all crumpled."

"What? You put live birds in there, too?"

"No, he was stuffed," laughed Fanny. "Oh, let that alone, please!"

Blue Eyes had picked up the old jacket with the torn sleeve and held it out at arm's length. "Oh, and this!" holding up a dirty shoe with the tips of her fingers; "what make you pack up such stuff?"

"You don't understand that—you have never been out in the country," said Fanny, patting her old shoes; "if you only knew all the nice places those little fellows have carried me to—up to Deer Lodge, and the Devil's Pulpit, and the Nine Fountains in the woods where we used to find mayflowers, and all around Pine Brook, where you can catch forty perch in one afternoon. I caught forty-two one evening, besides a carp that weighed six pounds, and I didn't get home in time for supper, and guess what pa said when I did get back: 'You'll catch a fish as big as old Mrs. Bremser yet, if you keep on;' that's all he said, and I had all the supper I

wanted that night, in spite of her. And in clear weather we went up to Lookout Rock, where you could see Tower Peak and the Ilsen Burg and the Cloud Mountains, where there were dragons in old times, and if we had time we took a peep into Haller's Cave and picked up pieces of mountain glass that bend like paper and you can look through like through a window, and pa showed me the place where somebody had cut a mark of a cross in the rocks, and they said there was a treasure buried near there, and somebody would find it some day. And we did find such nice things; squirrel nests, and large caterpillars that make butterflies as big as your hand, and bluebird eggs and elfin stones. And there were so many wild berries in the woods.''

Nellie had put her wax-candle down, and suddenly caught her friend around the neck. ''Oh, dear!'' said she, ''don't I wish me could see all those things? No wonder you gets homesick!''

She picked up the old shoes again and contemplated them with a new kind of interest. ''No, you right,'' with another hug; ''I wouldn't sell them for hundred dollar if they were mine and been along to all so sweet places.''

Fanny made no reply, but pressed the sympathizer's hand.

"Say, Fanny," resumed Blue Eyes, "next year, when vacation come, will you take me along to see all that, if I try with all my might and be good to you?"

"Yes, you must come, that's all about it," said Fanny. "Pa likes you already, and would be glad to have you stay, and—" lowering her voice—"may be she wouldn't say anything against it either."

"Your mother? Oh, she's good," said Nellie confidently; "I can tell that by a way she put up your things and imbroider your apron for keepsake."

"Why, that's no keepsake at all," sneered Fanny; "she—but, say, you make me remember something; she did give me one keepsake, and I declare, I never looked at it yet; where's that—oh, Nell, what became of my little basket with knickknacks?"

"Do you mean this?" opening the closet door, and producing a basketful of miscellanies.

"Yes, there it is! Now let's see who is the best guesser," laughed Fanny, holding up the little package—"honor bright, I have not the least idea what it could be, no more than you have."

"A letter-weight with your names on," suggested Nellie.

"I say it's some perfume, or a piece of scented

soap; she's too stingy to have any engraving done for me."

"Perhaps it's something good to eat?"

"Or—oh, pshaw—let's open it and be done," laughed the tomboy, losing her patience. Here, cut this string, I can't break it. Now—oh, look! Why, that's a golden watch—it's hers, and look at this piece of paper:

" 'For my darling daughter.' "

"Did you ever!" stammered Fanny; then with a blush of sincere gratitude and contrition — "she isn't half bad, now, is she?"

"Oh, my, no! And here's some more," said Blue eyes, taking up a little sealed envelope; "there's money in there—look! didn't I tell? Five little gold dollars!" (another hug and five kisses) "we're all rich now."

"I didn't think she would do that," mused Fanny, who had sat down on her bed to examine the treasure trove at leisure; "oh, Nellie, and do you know I never"—she stopped, ashamed to confess the whole turpitude of her conduct.

"You never thank her half enough for it, did you?" asked Blue Eyes, with the shrewd guess of a mind-reader.

"Nor the other half either," whispered Fanny; "I just skipped out and never talked to her."

"Say, never do that some more," said Nellie solemnly; "you lose great good friend some days."

Fanny wound up her watch, then put it down, and covered her face with both hands—perhaps to hide a deeper blush.

The little mind-reader gave her a chance for retrospection.

"It's get late, dear," said she at last; "shall we make bed and puts the candle out?"

"Yes, just wait a minute," said Fanny; "we can't let this lay around, can we? They would take it away, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; Orla got a watch, but not as fine as yours," said Blue Eyes; "and the Swartz girls have money often; Melanie, she show me three half dollar last week. Just put yours in pocketbook and no one know but Nellie."

"And no one else shall have a share of it, Nell," said Fanny, giving her friend a good-night hug. "Now out with your candle, here goes for a nice dream of Allenton."

Two weeks went by, and on two following Sundays Fanny had joined the excursion party, when the principal assembled the girls in the lecture-

room and let them take their choice between indoor and outdoor pastimes. A considerable plurality always took their chance with the outing committee, but on the third Sunday Fanny decided to stay. She could plead the usual excuse without straining the truth; for nearly half a month a feeling of unperformed duty had weighed on her soul, and she wanted to avail herself of this chance to write her folks a good, long letter.

So, after breakfast, she went up to her room and locked the door to prevent intrusion. There were so many things she wanted to write about that she could not be at a loss for a beginning half as much as for an end; only the choice of the apostrophe made her hesitate:

"Dear father and mother?" or "Dear parents?"

After chewing her penholder for at least ten minutes she crumpled up her first attempts, and began a new sheet:

"My Own Dear Papa: This is Sunday, and by my watch I have lots of time before dinner, so I thought I had better let you know how I am getting on. And before I forget it: tell mamma I am a thousand times obliged for that watch; it is the prettiest in the house; Miss Reymar keeps hers in a velvet case, with blue-glass pearls, but it isn't near

as pretty as mine. On the day I left I was so out of my mind that I forgot thanking ma; I forgot my butterfly catcher, too, and I wish you would send it; it's in the stable on the first rack next to White Bess. Don't sell Bess, please, I want to ride her when I come back; I found I can manage her all right. We have no horses here and no cows or dogs either, nothing but a place they call their stable, for horses to be put in when they have country-visitors. They haven't even cats, except old Mrs. Scoffield, the steward; she's the meanest old cat you ever saw. And there isn't a bird in the house; they haven't got much of anything but books. Books, they have an awful lot; more than anybody could read if he tried. So where's the use to have so many.

"And there's no use stuffing a person with so much arithmetic; I know we could live a thousand years in Allenton and never be bothered with such stuff. I wouldn't say anything if it was not for the long divisions, and the rule of three; but the worst of all is fractions; its more than human nature can stand; 27 and $\frac{11}{15}$ divided by 8 and $\frac{22}{45}$; I leave it to you if that isn't enough to make your hair turn gray in one night.

"This isn't a bad country; their apples beat ours, and there must be dead loads of berries in the mountains; I saw a boy bring in a two-gallon lot in a basket the other day, and he had picked them all in the forenoon. That's what I should like to do;

but they won't let us. If we do go out we have to march two and two, in a long line, like geese waddling out to a pasture, and they go so slow; I often feel like jumping a fence and making a break for the woods before they can catch me; but if I did I would never come back to that old jail; I just could not do it. I got so I cannot look at the mountains at all; it's like a lot of nice cherries on a tree you cannot climb.

"I'm glad you took my little doggie back again, pa; I can see it now, he wouldn't live here a month, and if we could raise him he would run away as soon as he had got the least bit of sense. But I couldn't do that, anyhow; I would have nothing to give him, poor thing. They watch you like cats when you eat, and I'm afraid almost to touch anything I like, for if I do and eat a little bit too much or too fast there is no end of the jawing. We're living worse than your prisoners in the courthouse; what they did get they could eat in a way to suit themselves; I would sooner starve than be watched and worried all the time.

"I'm sorry if I think of all the money this costs you, and what nice things we could have bought with it, and here it's not much use to you or me; I have no head for studying, like some of them. You remember that Danish girl that brought me my hat and gloves when you was talking to me at the door; well, she can draw almost anything; this week she finished a wolf's head in black chalk; it

just looks like it was alive. And if she gets a chance at the piano she can play good enough to give concerts; I'm blamed if I can see how she can do it.

"We have to take our turn waiting at table and clean our own rooms; but that isn't all; on Wednesday afternoon we have to mend our own clothes, and darn our stockings. It's often so hot that I would give a dollar for leave to take a run out in the garden, but they won't let you stir, and you have to waste the nice afternoon getting your fingers sore and your eyes aching, and all for an old stocking that you could buy ready-made for fifteen cents. If they would let me I'd pick fifteen cents' worth of berries to buy a pair and be done.

"The little pet tree-toad you caught for me died, and Nellie and me made him a good grave, because he had been a good pet. He always used to come to the top of his ladder when I brought him a fly and never tried to bite anybody; he was the cutest little thing I ever saw, but maybe that's the reason he got out of this so quick. He had too much sense to stay in a place like this.

"When vacation comes you needn't trouble to fetch me; I'll run all the way afoot, I'll be so glad to get back; only I'm afraid I will kiss some of you dead. Yes, I know, I'll kiss everybody—ma, too, and all the cats and doggies. Rosa used to hit Foxie with a wet mop when he jumped her and wouldn't stop romping on the floor; and that's just

what I will do; I'll hug you all; so you had better have a mop ready if I get too funny. Give my love to Mr. Sanders and all the neighbors, and don't forget, Your own Tomboy-Girl,

"FANNY.

"P.S.—Can I have drawing-lessons? I should like to send you a picture, and I know I could learn that quicker than darning old socks.

"P.S. No. 2.—Say, pa, could you manage to send me a little box full of cakes and sausages? Nellie is always so hungry when we go to bed in the evening, and I, too."

The Maldens were at supper, with Preacher Sanders and a few young neighbors for guests, when Fanny's letter arrived with the evening mail. The squire read a few passages to himself; then commanded silence and read the whole aloud.

"Mr. Sanders," said he, "do you remember how many girls they have in that institute?"

"About forty, I think, besides the day scholars."

"Well, now, tell me frankly: Do you believe that any one of them could write a letter like that?"

"I don't know, but I admit that I doubt it."

"What do you say, Annie?"

"They might write what they call more correct," said Mrs. Malden; "but for wit Fanny is clearly

ahead of the average of her age; she's a brighter girl than I imagined, I confess.''

''Well, then, it's my turn to make a confession,'' said the squire; ''the fact is I am getting ashamed of myself to keep a girl like her boxed up in that prison; I feel like hitching up and fetching her back right away.''

''Oh, Henry! It's nothing but homesickness, and she will soon get over that.''

''Get used to it like eels to frying, you mean, or like a life-prisoner to his cell? She's fretting her life away, and I don't see why we should keep tormenting her, the only child we've got. She has seen the difference between home-life and college-life, now, and that is the main thing, remarked the squire.''

''I can't help thinking it would be a mistake to take her away just now.''

''Worse than that, it would almost be wicked,'' said the preacher, who had read Fanny's letter over again. ''Mrs. Malden is right; it's just the usual homesickness of a child suddenly transferred to the care of strangers, but in a few months her habits will have adapted themselves to the new circumstances, and the benefits will be lifelong. Even this first month has wrought a decided change for

the better; it would be like tearing out a plant that has just begun taking root in a new soil."

Squire Malden made no reply. They had silenced but not convinced him; his heart still pleaded the cause of his homesick child. There were other motives, too, that he hardly ventured to define, even to himself; he had felt lonesome these last few weeks, and could not take a ramble in the hills and woods without yearning for the companionship of his merry Tomboy. The servants missed her too; Rosa and Joe had been sulking; and her little playmates often looked wistfully over the hedge of the deserted garden. It was all very well to talk of duty and expediency, but—

> "Still we can feel, where'er we go,
> That there has passed a brightness from this earth;"

and Squire Malden somehow could not get rid of a misgiving that Fanny was bartering the actual sunshine of life for the imaginary, or merely possible, advantages of a fashionable education.

"Say, Rosa"—he suddenly turned to the servant girl, who had overheard the parson's remarks and had been lingering about the room in the vague hope of an autocratic veto—"say, get a box, will you? By the beard of the prophet! They shall not starve her, anyhow."

"Wouldn't it be best to let her get used to eating her meals at regular hours?"

But no contradiction would avail this time, and a twenty by thirty-inch box, a foot deep, was forthwith stuffed with sausage, biscuits, apples and sponge-cakes, with a lot of raisins and preserves for good measure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next Wednesday was one of the sultriest days of that warm summer, and in the afternoon the indoor atmosphere became so oppressive that some of the girls began to nod over their darning task.

Fanny had never been more utterly homesick. She felt dizzy and saw the points of her knitting-needles as through a mist.

"Go and wash your hands and your face, and things will go better," said Miss Gunther when she saw her lay down her work in despair.

"Oh, what's the use?" said she wearily, and the girls began to titter.

"Wait, I'll straighten that out for you," said Peggie Swartz, picking up the grimy-looking stocking; but Fanny jerked it back again.

"You leave that alone, now," said she snappishly.

Just then the principal entered the room. She went slowly along the row of chairs, now and then peeping over one of the knitters' shoulders, or stopping to call attention to some mistake.

"Don't get your stocking too tight, Peggie," she whispered; "the mended places are most liable to tear again anyhow."

Fanny's turn came next. "How are you getting on, child? Why, what's the matter—are you tired?"

No reply.

"Let me see that stocking.

Fanny half turned her head, and then collapsed again into sullen apathy.

"I asked you to let me see that stocking; can't you hear? What's the matter with you?" Then picking up the bag-like piece of soiled wool, "Look here, girls, did you ever see a more untidy-looking thing in this room? And a girl of her age! You ought to be ashamed of yourself; never let me see another such piece of work."

"My little six-year old sister can beat that," remarked Peggie; "but then mother makes her wash her hands."

Miss Flora compared Fanny's stocking to an old coffee-bag, and that set off the laughing girl, and the tittering fit became contagious.

Fanny picked up her work again, while all eyes were fixed on her, Nellie's with pity, Miss Gunther's with astonishment and vague apprehension, the rest with derision.

"Come, let me help," said Nellie as soon as the principal had left the room; "you get him all wrong."

"Oh, leave me alone, can't you," growled Fanny.

"Let me try, please," insisted Blue Eyes; "if you keep on you gets so tangled nobody can help after awhile."

"I told you I don't want no help," cried the tomboy; "now you mind your own business"—looking this way and that; then suddenly doubling up her stocking she dashed it against the door with a violence that scattered the needles in all directions.

"Look out! she's getting crazy," screamed Peggie Swartz, upsetting her chair and retreating behind her sister.

"Keep your seats, every one of you!" said Miss Gunther in an excited whisper—but it was too late.

"What's the matter here?" asked the principal, re-entering the room.

Nobody volunteered an explanation, but the stocking, the ball of wool and the scattered needles told their own story.

"Did you dare to fling down your work like this?" she asked, turning upon the culprit; "now you answer my question; did you do that on purpose?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Fanny.

"Step out here and pick it up again."

Fanny did not stir.

"Are you going to pick that up now or not?"

"No, ma'am."

"What do you mean?"

"I ain't going to do it."

For a moment Miss Reymar stood still, staring at the offender in speechless surprise; but she soon recovered her self-command.

"Very well," said she, "go up to your room. I'll attend to your case.

Fanny stalked out of the room, then flew upstairs and tore out her trunk from its resting place behind the bed, fully resolved to pack her baggage for Allenton. She had already emptied the contents of her bureau drawers when Nellie and Miss Gunther entered the room.

"Why, Fanny, what in the name of common sense is the matter with you?" asked the young teacher.

Fanny crouched down on a little footstool and sobbed aloud.

"Child, come to your senses," said Miss Gunther. "I want to talk to you."

"I can't, I—I want to go home," sobbed Fanny.

"You mustn't talk like that, dear; take this chair now, and act like a sensible girl."

"I can't get along in this place; they're all against me;" with intermittent sobs.

"You are mistaken, dear," said the teacher kindly; "we all like you, and if you would just be a little bit reasonable you would get along as easy as any of them, or easier. All your teachers would be sorry if you should do anything foolish now, and you would make me ashamed of my own Allenton."

"They just want me to stay so they get a chance to tease me," growled Fanny, trying to avoid the teacher's eye.

"You cannot possibly believe that, dear," said Miss Gunther; "do you suppose that is what Peggie and Nellie had in their mind when they offered to help you? And do you think that's the reason I came up here to help all I can, now? I will have to go and leave you if you talk like that. Now make up your mind: will you be sensible? Or"—taking a step toward the door—"do you want me to go?"

"I—want you to stay," sobbed Fanny, clutching the teacher's dress.

Miss Gunther turned, took a chair and drew

Fanny on her lap. "How hot you are, you bad tomboy," she whispered, patting the culprit's face. "Get her a glass of water, Nellie."

Nellie had collapsed in a chair near her own bed, sobbing as woefully as her friend, but now started up and flew to the washstand.

"Come, now, drink, Fan," she coaxed, "you made me cry, too, with your bad talk; haven't I been good to you all I could? Stop cry now and drink and let me wash you face."

"There, now," said Miss Gunther, "will you ever tell us again you have no friends here? You surely could not have been in your right mind when you talked like that. You will get over all this, dear, and be our own good girl again. But do you know what you must do now?"

"I don't know," sobbed Fanny.

"Yes, you do. You must go down now and ask Miss Reymar's pardon."

"She wants to get rid of me," pouted the Tomboy; "she's always nagging me and scolding me about nothing."

"Nothing? Do you call that nothing if you refuse to answer her questions and defy her before the whole class? Just ask yourself what would become of this place if we should allow them all to act

like that. Miss Reymar makes all possible allowance for what I told her about your folks, or she would not have had so much patience this afternoon. She would have sent you home.''

''I wish she would,'' snarled the tomboy.

''You mean you would rather be disgraced and make your parents miserable than show that you are sorry for the way you acted?''

Fanny gulped, but made no reply.

''Let me ask you one question,'' said Miss Gunther; ''did you ever ask anybody's pardon in your life?''

Fanny shook her head.

''What! Not your father's either?''

''My father's?''—looking up with an expression of sincere surprise; ''no; he always was good to me. He let me do what I liked.''

''That explains it,'' thought Miss Gunther. ''And your mother?'' she asked; ''tell me honestly now, was she satisfied, too, to let you do what you pleased?''

''No, I made her mad once in awhile,'' admitted the tomboy after some hesitation.

''And then you asked her pardon, didn't you now?''

"No, I never. She didn't expect me to. She knows I couldn't do it, that's why."

"Oh, Fanny, Fanny! Don't you see then we must make up for lost time? My dear girl, how do you expect to get along in the world with your habit of butting your head against every wall and expecting everything to give way? You'd have everybody against you before you knew where you are at. In Allenton that might do as long as you were a little romp of a tomboy with a kind father like yours; but you wouldn't find another such place in a year, and what will become of you if you keep on in this way? You can't defy the whole world; your own sense ought to tell you that. Shall we go down now and see Miss Reymar?"

Fanny's eyes had filled with tears, but it was some time before she made an articulate reply. "I can't do it, Miss Gunther," said she at last.

"You can, child, and you must. Oh, heavens! Isn't there any way to open your eyes and let you see things as they really are?"

Miss Gunther paused and looked out in the garden. Nellie was crying again.

"Come, take those two chairs, Nellie and you," said Miss Gunther; "sit down here, you two, and let me tell you a true story about a foolish, way-

ward girl that lost her chance for happiness and made herself and all her folks wretched, just because of an insane fit of stubbornness; let me tell you what happened to her, and then, Fanny, if you still tell me 'I can't,' I'll give you up for a lost child and never waste any time trying to help you again."

The young teacher's eye wandered back to the garden and the blue mountains beyond. Her mind seemed to dwell in the past.

"It is so warm in here," said she; "let us open this window."

A stream of cool air entered the room; clouds had loomed up in the south, and twitches of electric fire darted along their dark seams. There was a thunderstorm brewing.

"What a lovely breeze!" said Miss Gunther, with her eyes still on the mountains; "say, Fanny, how old are you?"

"I'll be sixteen next month."

"Sixteen? Then you are old enough to understand—yes, children, I'm going to tell you about a girl that wasn't much older, when she thought she could run her head through every wall, and you will see what came of it. Her name was —never mind, what; let us call her Lucy—an orphan girl, but brought up in comfort, her grandmother's only

pet. She wasn't a bad girl—on the contrary, no child of her age was more easily touched to tears by the sight of misery; if she saw a shivering beggar boy on the porch she would never stop teasing her grandmother till the little scamp had been stuffed with all the good things they had in the house, and if her grandmother was sick she would not allow any of the servants to do for her what a girl could possibly do, and often ran half a mile to the drug store in rain and storm; but she had one odious fault—stubbornness rather than own her blunders she would run the risk of losing her best friends, and like Fanny she would sooner have bitten off her own tongue than ask anybody's pardon. Her grandmother was strict enough with the servants—too strict, Lucy often thought, but she could only spoil her little granddaughter. 'Why should I scold her, poor thing?' she used to say; 'it's bad enough that she has lost her father and mother.' "

"Was Lucy pretty?" asked Blue Eyes, who was leaning against the window, with one arm around Fanny's neck.

"I think so," said the young teacher, with a faint blush; "at least that's what people called her. But that does not matter. Listen what happened. In her eighteenth year Lucy made the acquaintance of

a young artist, who gave her lessons in landscape painting, and after a few months persuaded her to send one of her water-color studies to a prize exhibition of amateur work. Another girl took the first prize, and Lucy was so provoked at what she called the stupidity of the judges that she vowed never to enter their gallery again, and moreover threatened to burn her landscape as soon as ever they had returned it.

"'I know a better plan,' said the young artist; "let me send it to another exhibition, managed by real connoisseurs.'

"'I won't do it,' snapped Lucy; 'I'll never try for a prize again.'

"'Try once more,' coaxed Walther—I think that was the artist's name.

"'Yes, and be snubbed once more,' sneered Lucy; 'I let you fool me once, but I'm not going to do it again.'

"'You will lose your teacher if you talk like that,' was all her grandmother said.

"'I don't care,' was the saucy reply; 'and I don't believe it,' she thought to herself. Girls have keen eyes in such matters, and somehow Lucy knew this teacher would come back, no matter what she said. She had noticed that he drew her profile

a little oftener than the needs of all the albums in the neighborhood would explain.

"But when he did go away, though only on a visit to his sister, and with the promise to be back in a week, Lucy all at once discovered that weeks could stretch like months, and that no seven days of her life had ever seemed half as long. She had often contradicted Walther in a manner that would have driven away nine out of ten other visitors, but she now felt glad she had never gone a step too far. If he ever should really lose his temper and leave for good she suspected that earth would seem a dreary dwelling place.

"Her grandmother, too, at last saw which way things were drifting, but she liked Walther better than any other young man of her acquaintance, and when her two pets one day entered her room arm in arm, she gave them her blessing and thanked heaven that the dearest wish of her fond heart had been fulfilled.

"And now you may suppose that love and happiness wrought a change in Lucy's character? Walther thought so, too, but he could not help noticing that trifles still sufficed to spoil his bride's good humor for days together, and one day he resolved to ask her a very serious question."

Miss Gunther paused, and a keen observer would have noticed that it cost her an inward struggle to continue her story, but the two girls ascribed her silence to the sudden gust of dust whirls that swept by from the street, heralding the outbreak of a storm.

"Go on, please," begged Blue Eyes; "I wonder so much what he will ask."

Fanny said nothing, but no story she had ever heard or read had so deeply engaged her personal interest. Now and then she felt as if she were listening to a prediction of her own fate, and as if the heroine's name must have been Fanny, instead of Lucy.

"Yes," continued Miss Gunther, "Walther felt forebodings of impending trouble, and one day he made up his mind to ask his bride a grave question. They had been air-castle building—planning a tour to Italy, Switzerland, and southern France, with a mutual promise to let the impressions of that journey decide the choice of a permanent home, when Walther took his bride's hand: 'Tell me, Lucy,' he asked, 'would you still love me as you do now if we should be unlucky and have to keep house with poverty?'

" 'Oh, don't be foolish, Walther,' she snarled,

vexed at the interruption of her rosy daydreams. 'Whatever put such a question in your head?'

"'It's a question that has been weighing on my mind for quite awhile,' said Walther; 'tell me now, would your heart still be true to me if we should get poor?'

"'Oh, don't,' she growled, 'don't keep harping on such nonsense; grandma is rich and your pictures sell as fast as you finish them.'

"'But then, you know, trouble often rises like clouds in a clear sky; you can't tell what might happen; your fortune might be shipwrecked and I fall sick.'

"'I don't want to listen to such talk,' she snapped. 'I told you once, but you want such plain hints. I hate calamity howlers.'

"'I hope for the best, as much as you do, but you ought to answer my question and take a weight off my heart,' insisted Walther.

"'Well, then, it's your own fault if my answer does not suit your programme,' said Miss Spitfire. 'I don't want to keep house with poverty, as you call it; if there was really any such risk I'd sooner not marry at all.'

"He turned pale, but tried to master his mis-

givings. 'You do not mean what you say, love,' taking her hand—'you cannot possibly mean it!'

"'I just mean what I say, and that's all about it,' she cried, jerking her hand away; 'I'm just about tired of your foolish talk.'

"Unfortunately Lucy's grandmother had overheard her last words, and thought it time to mediate —with results she had little foreseen.

"'Don't mind that silly girl, Walther,' said she, 'it's just one of her April weather tantrums; she doesn't know her own mind for ten minutes together.'

"'Yes, I do,' cried Lucy, now losing her temper altogether; 'I just mean what I say, and so he will find out if he keeps nagging me. Let him go and keep house with poverty if he's hankering after such housekeepers; every one to his taste; but I've to decline with thanks. I'm quite content to let him go his way if mine doesn't suit him.'"

"Oh, how mean she is!" cried Blue Eyes, "and such good man! She will lose him, I know!"

"She was not mean, only stubborn," said Miss Gunther, "and stricken with an infatuation worse than blindness when her fits of ill-temper got the better of her. Her grandmother knew that, but her words almost killed her lover. 'Is that your last

word, dear?' he asked, trying to get hold of her hand, but she tore herself away and whisked out of the room.

"Her poor old grandmother followed her to her growlery, but found the door locked. 'Here I stay,' thought Lucy, 'till he comes and begs my pardon.'

"And Walther did come. For nearly two hours he had walked up and down the park, with his brain afire, and struggling as against the loss of his reason; then his wild thoughts gave way to a stern resolve, but before he left the city he returned to the house once more and knocked at his lost love's door.

" 'Open the door, Lucy,' he cried; 'I must speak to you; my fate and yours is at stake! Hear me before it is too late! You must hear me!'

"That sounded like a command, and Lucy's only answer was a derisive laugh. 'You won't get in here if I can help it,' she cried, when he knocked again; 'I've had all I can stand of your nonsense, and more, too.'

"He knocked again, but received no reply.

" 'Lucy!' he cried, 'I have to leave you! Hear me before it is forever too late! I ask you the last time!'

"Everything was still then, but Lucy knew that

her lover was still lingering at her door, clinging to the last shadow of his hopes. A full minute passed. Then came the last knock—not an appeal for admission this time. 'Good-by, then, Lucy,' said Walther; 'God bless you and protect you.' ''

The teacher paused again, and Nellie rose and fell upon her neck, sobbing. Fanny only clutched her hand, but had suddenly turned pale.

''Yes, you are right, children,'' said Miss Gunther, ''she had lost him forever. The days came and went, and every time the house bell rang or a carriage drew up at the door Lucy's heart gave a start; she hoped her Walther had at last returned; but she hoped in vain.

''Yet all this time she knew where a letter would reach him, and she also knew that four words would suffice to bring him back to her feet: 'Forgive me and return;' but those four words remained unwritten. Did she expect him to ask her pardon? She heard that he was going to leave the city. Was he going to leave without a last appeal? A letter at last did arrive, and after a glance at the handwriting she snatched it up and flew to her room. At last! At last!

''She tore off the envelope and out fell the pieces of a broken engagement ring.

"'You did not recall me,' began the few lines he had added. 'I have waited for you long; but I can wait no longer. I have to leave you, Lucy, because I cannot guarantee you a future of unbroken sunshine, and you refused to promise me your love through gloom and light. While fortune smiles on you, you will never lack wooers, but you have lost one who loved you for your own sake.'

"Then she did fly to her grandmother, shrieking; then they did write and send to his lodgings in wild haste, but the messenger returned with the information that the young artist had left several hours ago, no one knew whither."

"Oh, why did he not wait?" cried Blue Eyes; "could he not wait one day more if he love her so?"

"He waited a long time," said the teacher, "and he had loved her dearly, but he would not have been a man if he had not his own pride, too; and he could not stand Lucy's waywardness any longer."

"And what became of Lucy?"

"Her luck left her—as she deserved," said Miss Gunther. "In less than a year after Walther's departure the failure of their business manager swept away her grandmother's entire fortune. Their fine villa had to be sold, and the pet child of luxury was obliged to earn her own daily bread."

Fanny looked up, horror-struck. "Yes, earn her own bread," repeated Miss Gunther; "the mere idea makes you turn pale; but Lucy often told me that poverty was not her worst sorrow. There was something much, much worse, the thought of what might have been, if it had not been for her insane stubbornness."

"She was just crazy," said Blue Eyes.

Fanny blushed and cast down her eyes.

"Yes, child," said Miss Gunther, reading her thoughts, "shall they say such things of my own girl?"

"I will ask her—her pardon," stammered Fanny; "I'll do it when she is alone some day," she whispered, "so there won't be a whole goose-gang of them cackling at me again"—clutching at the straw of a chance for postponing the dreaded moment.

Miss Gunther smiled. "You are right," she said, "we had better see her when she is alone, so let's hurry up and wash your face; Miss Reymar is pretty sure to be in her own room, getting her mail ready at this time of the day."

Fanny felt herself trapped. "I'll go then and be done with it," said she with the courage of despair.

Two years ago she was caught in a rainstorm on one of her hunting trips, and on reaching Pine

Brook on her way home, found the footlog gone and had to wade the torrent, waist deep, at the risk of being carried off her feet and drowned, but she made the attempt not half as reluctantly as she now went downstairs to face the wrath of the principal.

She reached the door and stopped, half-inclined to turn back and brave the consequences, when she heard Miss Gunther coming downstairs. Shame, if not repentance, overcame her hesitation, and she opened Miss Reymar's door.

Miss Reymar was sitting at her desk, writing, but presently laid down her pen and faced the penitent.

"Well?"

How gladly Miss Tomboy would have exchanged the horrors of that moment for the perils of Pine Brook! Her heart beat at fever-speed, but she could not speak. She would have given all her little savings, yes, and her gold watch, if Miss Gunther had only come in just then to help her out. But Miss Gunther had gone back to the classroom.

"What is it, child?" asked the principal kindly.

Fanny tried to speak, but could only sob. "Be —beg your pardon," she choked out at last and burst out crying convulsively.

"You made me very angry, Fanny," said Miss

Reymar, "and I meant to write to your father, but I see you are sorry for what you have done, and we won't let this go any further if you give me your promise never to misbehave in that manner again. For the next time, remember, would be the last; I would have to send you back home."

"I can go without your leave," Miss Tomboy was on the point of blurting out; but the defiant words took the form of another sob and she relapsed into her sullen silence.

"Then you promise me that?" asked Miss Reymar.

Fanny still hesitated, but saw a short way to terminate this interview and nodded her head.

"Then give me your hand," said the principal, "and I hope you will help me forget all that happened to-day. You can go now.

"Wait a minute," said Miss Reymar, when the penitent still lingered at the door; "it's too late to go back to the classroom now, and a little too early for supper, but you can put on your hat and take this note to the bookstore for me."

Miss Reymar, too, was a mind-reader now and then, and had guessed the cause of Fanny's hesitation.

"Yes, ma'am," said Miss Tomboy, with a sigh

of relief, and started on her errand, glad as a truant who has been let off with a reprimand after expecting more striking arguments. Fanny would sooner have carried a message to the next post office town than have to go back to the knitting-room now.

CHAPTER VIII.

STILL Fanny tried to keep her promise. At the end of the month, when the teachers made their private reports to the principal, Miss Reymar was glad to have three witnesses to the fact that Miss Tomboy had turned a new leaf and for the last three weeks had resisted the temptation to scandalize her class by an open outbreak of ill-temper.

"She still pouts," said Miss Lead, the teacher of English grammar and literature; "but she does not contradict me any more and that is—what would you say?—a step in the right direction."

"And she's trying to work out problems in her own room," said the arithmetic teacher; "Miss Holden, her roommate, the other day showed me a large sheet of paper covered with essays in fractions, and that shows she is trying to improve, though her progress thus far, I am sorry to say, is not much to boast about. As for her conduct, I confess I'm afraid to give her a chance to go off again;

she doesn't seem to be a bad girl, but she has to be handled as cautiously as an explosive mixture."

"I had never any trouble with her in that way," said Professor Althoff, the teacher of German grammar and composition. "I've bantered her unmercifully, just by way of experiment, to see how far it's safe to go in that direction, but she always joins in the laugh at her own shortcomings, and keeps chuckling to herself, as a proof that she's not merely tittering from the teeth outward, as some of them do when you take them to task. And what we considered her prospensity for slan I now think is only a predilection for striking expressions. In her little spats with her playmates she will forgive pretty saucy talk whenever she is tickled by a new word."

"In French zey cannot teach her many new words," said Monsieur Miquard; "some of ze geerls beat her in orthography, but she is ze only one zat talk her own ideas; ze rest just repeat a lesson."

"Well, all things considered, don't you think she will do?" asked Miss Gunther, who never missed a chance to put in a good word for her Allenton pet.

"About her progress, you mean? Oh, I had never any doubt about that after the first day,"

said the principal; "but her temper still gives me sore misgivings; I'm always afraid some day she will do something that cannot be compromised."

"It is a dreadful fault," admitted Miss Gunther; "but her last experience will make her more careful, and I hope you will overlook her little shortcomings till she has got used to our system and doesn't feel any longer like a wild wood-bird in a cage."

Only Professor Althoff stuck to his first verdict. "They don't know how to take her, that's all," said he one day when he was alone with Miss Gunther.

But then Professor Althoff could get along with anybody. All the girls enjoyed the grammar lessons —for his sake. His popularity eclipsed even that of Miss Gunther. Flora composed stanzas in honor of his bright eyes, and shrewd observers entertained a private suspicion that his magnetism had induced Orla Sassuwitch to stay over for a third term. To be sure, she teased the girls that ogled him from behind grape-arbors and half-open doors, but one day he left a rosebud on his desk, and the moment he had left the room the whole class made a rush for that desk. But Orla was too quick for them all, and waved her trophy with an air of triumph. Under pretext of a trip to the post office she contrived to slip into a jeweler's shop and order a

golden *medaillon* with a Russian inscription. In that mystic receptacle she carried the keepsake of her idol. That she carried it around her neck under a high lace collar did not prevent detection, but not one of the detectives could decipher the meaning of the Oriental hieroglyphics.

But Nellie's idolatry went even further. One evening Fanny caught her in the act of tattooing her arm with a number six darning needle and rubbing in blue ink-powder to perpetuate the initials of her Apollo.

"Why, Nell, you must be crazy," laughed Miss Tomboy; "suppose Herr Althoff should catch you at that, and then what would you do! And besides, there might be aniline in that powder, and that's a kind of poison."

"Oh, now, you hush," coaxed Blue Eyes; "I don't tease you and you must not tease me either; you're a boy, half of you, and you know nothing about affair of the hearts."

Fanny had to laugh till the tears got in her eyes; but she, too, admitted that she liked grammar lessons—under present circumstances. In composition she had several times been at the head of her class, and her many rivals fretted and wondered how she did it.

"Here's a batch of remarkable productions on our week's topic, 'A picnic in the woods,'" said the genial professor one day; "some of you got poetical enough to make the nightingales drop dead with envy; but if picnics were really conducted on that plan I'm afraid we couldn't sell tickets at a nickel apiece. Sentiment is all right in its proper place, but, my dear young friends, do you suppose the members of an outing party are doing nothing but stalk about quoting Miss Lydia Languish and addressing apostrophes to yonder summit — 'so grandly, brightly, spiritually blue,'"—quoting one sample. "I confess I felt grandly, spiritually blue myself when I read that."

All eyes turned on Flora Hoopole, but the convulsive tittering extended its contagion even to the culprit herself.

"And here one of you describes a wood thrush as 'singing sweet anthems to the morn,'" continued the professor; "you cribbed that somewhere or other, and that's all right, but then picnics do not come off at half-past three in the morning, unless the sheriff is on your track. There's in fact only one really sensible essay in this lot, and that's Fanny Malden's. Some passages could be published in a literary magazine without changing a single

word, and there's no moaning of wood doves and mysterious whisper of the foliage about it. Only one thing I must tell you again, Miss Malden, I wish your handwriting would improve as fast as your syntax; it spoils the effect of a clever manuscript if you have to stop in the middle of the prettiest passage and puzzle-guess at the meaning of some mysterious word. Your a's and o's look just alike, and here, where you want to tell us about that old cave that used to be inhabited by a *hag*, you put in a *hog*, instead of the old lady. And don't forget to make your h's a little plainer—taller, especially; they just look like n's; you will find a blue mark on one line that would have been the best of that page, where you wanted to describe the merry shouts of the youngsters, but what you did do was to inform us that 'the air was rent by their merry snouts.' They must have been enchanted by that pig-witch.''

Fanny laughed as heartily as Anemie Bosse, the champion titterer of Willdorf College, and she was unselfish enough to be really glad that her literary effort had not been crowned with unqualified praise; she could not help fearing that it would have cooled the friendship of Miss Blue Eyes if the professor had let her off without a little banter. Nellie, too,

had done her very best that time, and Professor Althoff had not even mentioned her essay, though she was one of his pets. Was it so absurdly bad that he ignored it to spare her feelings?

"I wish you tell me how you do to get so large praise," said Nellie, when she got her friend alone. "Miss Gunther say I write like print, but he never notice it."

"Oh, he doesn't go by handwriting alone," said Fanny, "or he would chase me out with a broomstick. I'm not a first-class speller either, but then I write just as I feel, and the rest of you are trying to ape an old governess with a dictionary and a set of false teeth—that's why."

But Nellie proved that same week that she could take a hand in a game of Tomboy herself.

On Saturday evening a light shower had chased the girls to their rooms a little sooner than usual, and Nellie was leaning out of the apple-tree window, casting covetous glances at the wealth of ripening fruit.

"Don't you wish you could flying, Fan," she whispered, "fly out and get some good ones, and into room again?"

"The apples, you mean?" said Miss Tomboy. "I could get them without flying. I wish they'd

give me leave, that's all. I'd show them how to get apples; we have a bigger tree than that, home, and I can climb it as easy as you would go up our stairs."

Nellie pricked up her ears. "You climb? Oh, Fan, isn't that good! Say"—in a still lower whisper—"I've got the prettiest scheme as ever lived."

"What is it?" tittered Fanny—"climb across there and help ourselves, you mean? I could do it, but some of them might see us, and they would be sure to go and tell."

"Oh, much better as that!"—putting her mouth close to her friend's ear; "this night, when a moon rise, then you and I rise, too, and——"

No Tomboy needed a plainer hint, and in her first exultation Fanny waltzed her friend all around the room. "And say," she whispered, drawing her down on her bed, "I'm going to put on my old field dress and outing shoes. I can do anything, after that. Wasn't it lucky I brought them along, now!"

"And I watch; you never see such good spy," chuckled Blue Eyes; "don't you wish old night would come?"

Just before bedtime the girls went down once

more to tell Miss Reymar good-night and get their week's merit marks.

"You're in good humor to-night, dear," said Miss Gunther, when she met her young *protégée* in the hall; "did you get good news from home? You look so merry and enterprising."

Fanny blushed and was glad mind-reading had not yet advanced to the rank of an exact science. But Miss Gunther evidently suspected nothing wrong, and had merely followed her habit of addressing a kind word to all her pets.

Minutes seemed hours before at last the big building composed itself to sleep, and lights went out one by one. Only in Miss Gunther's room there was still the glimmer of a lamp; she had made her rounds long ago, but was perhaps still reading or writing.

"Why don't she go sleep?" whispered Blue Eyes, who had been leaning out of the open window, at half-minute intervals; "maybe she keep night-lamp."

"Shall I get up?" asked Miss Tomboy.

"No, no, you wait till I call," warned Nellie; "wait ten minute and maybe all so much better, then."

All at once she started back from the window and

put her finger to her lips. "She nearly caught me that time," she tittered; "she had her head out looking at a moon."

A few minutes later they heard Miss Gunther close her window, and when Nellie ventured another peep the glimmer of the lamp had vanished.

"Now the great moment it's come," said she theatrically; "arise, you virgin, and commence so great work."

Fanny slipped out and dressed in two minutes; her old blouse—the one with the torn sleeve—had awaited the summons for an hour and a half.

"Oh, don't take those old shoe," whispered Blue Eyes; "they make you tramp so they all hear."

"Not a bit," laughed the Tomboy. "I'm used to them, and they're just right for climbing; they don't let you slip."

"Now hand me that basket," she whispered, and Nellie hung it around her neck, to let her keep her arms free.

"Don't fall now, and mind—" But Miss Tomboy was already in the apple tree. Light as a squirrel she had clambered across the next boughs, and was already standing on one of the main branches, leaning over here and there to explore the foliage in search of forbidden fruit.

"Here, catch!" and two big apples flew through the open window and rumbled across the floor.

"Oh, what you do!" protested Nellie in the loudest whisper she could risk; "they bump so they will wake Bridget, the cook; she sleep right under here."

"Oh, she's all right enough," laughed Fanny. "I can hear her snore like a rip-saw. Want another?"

"No, no, wait, put them in a basket."

"All right. Good-by, Nell, I'm going up, like Jack on the beanstalk."

"Oh, no, come back, I'm getting scared," begged Nellie; "you're so bold, and some big trouble happen."

"Don't fret"—and up went the Tomboy, hand over hand, looking weirdly and wonderfully in her white blouse.

She soon reached the top branches, fully forty feet above ground, but Fanny Malden had graduated in the climbing school of the Allenton mountain forests, and didn't feel a bit scared. After filling her basket she squeezed it into a fork of the next branch and tied Nellie's string around her waist, to turn the bosom of the wide blouse into an apple-bag. In that way she could carry a peck or two more, but she reflected that the increase of bulk might

interfere with the freedom of her movements, and was just turning to begin her retreat, when she put her foot on a branch that swayed like a switch and slapped violently across the next window—the room where Orla Sassuwitch slept in one bed and the twins in the other.

Melanie had not yet crossed the borders of dreamland, and started up with a suppressed shriek.

"Say, Peggie, Peggie"—she shook her sleeping sister—"wake up, did you hear that?"

"What, what?" rubbing her eyes and looking about in a dazed way.

"There, at the window," whispered Melanie, then suddenly gave a yell and clutched her sister's arm.

"I see it," she screamed; "oh, Peggie! Orla! Orla! A ghost—out in the tree there!"

Peggie dived under her blankets, but Orla Sassuwitch put on her shoes and advanced upon the window.

"Oh, don't," screamed Melanie; "it might grab you! Stop! Stop!"

"Oh, stop your bawling," said Orla, and opened the window sash. She put out her head, then leaned over and strained her eyes to ascertain the cause of a creaking and rustling sound, resembling the swaying of a tree in a fitful

gale. There wasn't a breath of air stirring, and the cloud veiling the moon drifted as slow as if it had gone to sleep.

"What did you see, kids?" asked Orla, looking back for a moment, but with one hand still under the window sash.

"I saw it quite plain one time," cried Melanie; "a big white ghost flying by and staring at me with red eyes as big as saucers."

"Is it gone?" asked Peggie, peeping out of her hiding-place, but instantly diving under again, when that rustling sound came plainer than before.

Orla opened the window again. "Come here, quick!" she cried; "oh, pshaw! you are too late; I did see something this time, a long white shape, and it seemed to whisk into the room right under here—why, that's Blue Eyes' and Tomboy's room isn't it?"

"Wonder if they are awake? Maybe it will grab them," said Peggie, sitting up in her bed.

Orla made no reply, but looked out of the window once more. "It's all quiet now," said she, "but I know I couldn't have been mistaken."

"Oh, please, ring the bell," said Melanie; "there's something wrong, that's sure!"

"And you are quite certain you saw it, too?"

questioned the skeptical young Russian—"a white shape, about your size, and with long, thin arms?"

"Yes, that's it, and I saw the eyes of it, too—just like owl eyes."

"I do wish I had been awake," said Orla; "but maybe we'll find out. Wait"—ringing the bell violently three or four times—"there! That'll fetch somebody."

Miss Gunther's voice was heard, and the cook's and steward's; there was hurrying to and fro, and presently a committee of investigation came upstairs with candles and lamps. Half a dozen girls had run out of their rooms, and Miss Lead, the English teacher, joined the procession in a long Scotch plaid and with her hair hanging loose over her shoulders. Miss Reymar had dressed in haste, and a little scullion clung to her skirts with eyes as big as Melanie's specter.

Orla heard them come and opened her door.

"What is wrong here?" asked the principal; "did anything happen?"

"Oh, Miss Reymar, we're scared half dead," whimpered Melanie. "We saw a ghost—a sure-enough ghost, right at our window! It half killed me when I saw it look in."

"You haven't been dreaming, have you?" asked Miss Reymar; "there are no ghosts, you know."

"Oh, but I wasn't asleep, madam; and we heard it, too; first something knocked at the window, and then I saw it as plain as I see you now: a big white thing with red eyes! Oh, my! oh, my!" hiding her face to exclude the horrid vision.

"Perhaps it was a burglar trying to get in your window," said Miss Reymar. "Did you see it, too, Orla?"

"Yes, ma'am, there's no doubt of it; I saw it and heard it. It looked like something in a white sheet climbing down the tree, and the last I saw of it, it seemed to jump in Nellie's window."

Miss Reymar was puzzled. Orla's reputation for veracity was well established, but on the other hand, it seemed hardly credible that a thief could have passed the well-guarded lodge gate, or scaled a wall crowned with a fringe of broken glass.

"How long ago did all that happen?" she asked, while the girls were clutching each other, anxious for additional revelations. Ghosts! Burglars! It was the first time Willdorf College had been convulsed with a sensation of that kind, and Flora Hoopole resolved to utilize the episode in her next novel.

"How long ago? Why, about a minute before I rang the bell," said Orla; "perhaps two minutes before I heard Miss Gunther call the cook."

Miss Gunther had vanished. The moment Orla mentioned the conclusion of the ghost show she had slipped away to take a peep in Nellie's room.

But her suspicions seemed unfounded. The window was closed, the room seemed in good order, and Fanny appeared to be fast asleep.

Nellie was sitting up, staring with well-feigned surprise.

"Oh, what happened?" she asked, "what made the bell ring? Is somebody sick? It scared me so!"

"They say somebody jumped in your window," said the principal, who had followed Miss Gunther.

Nellie made no reply, but thought swift and hard. What should she do? Tell the truth? Impossible! It would have sealed her doom, and Fanny's too. Still she shrank from the alternative of a direct falsehood, and could only stare in horror—not wholly feigned by this time.

"Poor child, she's scared out of her wits," said the principal; "never mind—it may have been a mistake. Orla and Melanie saw somebody trying to break in their room, and when they looked out

it seemed to climb down the tree and into your window. They thought it must have been a ghost."

"A ghost! Oh, how horrible!" cried Nellie; "oh, please, come in, and don't go off and leave me!"

"Don't, dear, you are too sensible to believe such things. I suppose those girls were dreaming, or saw the wind moving the apple tree. Look here," she laughed, "your roommate has stouter nerves! She went to sleep again, or maybe all this uproar never waked her."

"Fanny? Oh, she always sleep like that," said Blue Eyes. "I can't get her up hardly, some mornings. She——"

A sudden thrill of horror made the words die on her lips. At the foot of Fanny's bed the blankets were hanging halfway down, revealing a tip of those horrid Allenton outing shoes. Nellie had turned white with terror, but her color returned with her ready wit.

"Please, please, come here!" she cried; "I saw something like shadow just now! Oh, please, look under my bed and see if no ghost sitting there!"

"Don't be childish, Nellie," said the principal; but the diversion had answered its purpose. Miss Gunther had actually stooped down and taken a

peep under both beds, and before she was done Nellie managed to effect another *intermezzo.*

"Oh, Miss Lead, how funny you look! I thought first robber had come to kill us all! You look like Spanish robber in my picture-book!"

A general laugh followed, but a peep at her naked feet made the old lady turn red with shame, and the principal frowned. "Why, Nellie! can't you behave? That's no way to talk to a teacher! Go to your bed now. We had better all go now, Miss Gunther; if the truth was known all this scare may have been about a cat hunting birds in that tree. Good-night, children."

The moment the door closed Nellie slipped out of her bed, bolted the lock and then pounced on Tomboy's bed, hugging the simulator of slumber as if she was trying to choke her. "What you give me now, Fan," she chuckled, "your gold watch or ten thousand kiss? I saved you life, you bad Tomboy, you!"

"Say! Take care!" whispered Fanny, "they might hear you!"—then, with an installment remittance of her debt—"you're a good girl, Nell; it would have killed me if they had found us out."

"Then why didn't you cover up you old shoes,

you big baby?'' whispered Blue Eyes. ''They were sticking out of your blankets; d'you know that?''

''Were they, now? Oh''—with a low chuckle —''was that why you set them ghost-hunting under your bed? There—and there, and there—no, hold on, I have to kiss you good, this time. Did they really think I was asleep?''

''Miss Reymar did,'' said Blue Eyes; ''but——''

''But what?''

''Miss Gunther gave me such strange look,'' said Nellie, ''maybe she did see something, but didn't want to. But it's all right now,'' she continued, ''only next time you try don't go so high up.''

''No, thanks, I wouldn't try that again for a hundred dollars,'' said Fanny with a shudder; ''the one thing that saved me was those clouds; when I was about halfway up the moon was shining straight in my face, but then came a big black cloud, just in time to fool those kids—ghosts!''

Miss Tomboy indulged in another chuckle. She had been in the woods too often to believe in tree specters. ''Let's divide them, now,'' she whispered, reaching in her blouse and fishing out forbidden fruit by the dozen. ''Mercy! if they had made me get up and found all that!'' The mere idea gave her a fit of cold shivers, and all things

considered, Miss Fanny Malden resolved never to climb another tree after dark.

Early the next morning Miss Reymar took a stroll through the garden and stopped under Melanie's ghost tree.

"Oh, Mr. Harris," she called to the gardener, "come here and look at this. Wouldn't you say somebody must have been on that tree? Look at all those leaves and broken branches; and here, apples, too; they don't look ripe enough to have fallen without help."

The old gardener shook his head. "I don't see how the world they could get in, unless they brought a ladder along; but you're right; somebody has been fooling with that tree, there's no doubt of that."

"Then it may have been something more than a dream, after all," thought Miss Reymar, and felt half sorry that they had not adopted Tomboy's pup and utilized him for a watchdog.

All this while the real culprits had been watching her from a second-story window.

"What fun!" whispered Fanny; "old Harris is catching it hot. He's always growling at me and doesn't know I got even. Won't he have to watch a long time before he catches me on that tree again."

CHAPTER IX.

THE days grew shorter, and the first October frosts curtailed the programme of outdoor amusements. On Sunday afternoon the picture-books of the college library were in great request, and the young ladies began to exchange visits.

"I'm coming up to your room after dinner," said Flora Hoopole, when she met Fanny on her return from church. "I just finished another novel, and I can't help thinking it's a success."

"Oh, isn't that good," said Nellie; "I can't wait time till we find out how many got killed again. Is there suicides on every pages?"

"Wait till I come," said the poetess; "I don't like to spoil the effect by indiscretions. I don't believe in advance sheets."

"No, it's all winding-sheets," said Blue Eyes; "they dies so quick they can't advance many yard."

But in spite of that banter Flora Hoopole kept her word; and about half an hour after dinner entered Fanny's room with a bulky manuscript in rose-colored wrapping paper.

"Get water ready, now," suggested Nellie, "and smelling bottle, if somebody faint."

"It would make a nervous person faint to listen to your blunders," retorted the offended authoress. "Keep still, now—if you can."

"Yes, behave, Blue Eyes," said Fanny; "you don't know; it might be a pretty story."

"Oh, I know it is; just listen."

"Very well, I begin then," said the visitor. " 'The Secret of the Moaning Sea.'

"The ocean raged. Wild winds wooed the clouds that strained every nerve to elude their pursuit. The moon saw it all, and had often to avert her chaste face.

"Suddenly a frail bark darted through the breakers, and a young girl, light as a sylph, leaped ashore and secured her boat with a patent beach anchor.

"Then she heaved a sigh, and her forget-me-not eyes filled with tears. 'He loves me,' she cried, 'and ah! how I return his love! But my sister Aurora loves him likewise, and I love her as I love

my own life. Can I witness the convulsions of her agony? Never; even if my own heart should break.'

"She sighed again.

" 'The portals of death are open. Shall I enter them uninvited? Life should cease when its sunshine has fled; but I know my tough heart will fail to break.' "

"Now watch! She will climb rocks and jump to rises no more," predicted Nellie.

"How do you know?" snapped the authoress. "You are sure to spoil the best passages. Keep quiet now.

"For the third time she sighed. 'My heart will shrink,' she said, 'but I now,' advancing her number five lace shoe and planting it firmly on the beach, 'never shall Aurora——' "

"Say, Nell, guess what news I got," cried Melanie Swartz, bursting in the room at that critical moment. "A fine coach with a lady in sealskin came, and you ought to see the little pet of a girl she brought along! Talk about fairies! There isn't a painter born that could paint a prettier little face! If she was mine I'd kiss the life out of her. And I bet you all you want she's going to stay here. When they came in I heard Miss Reymar say

something that makes me sure she is. There, look yourself, you can see the coach at the gate.''

Nellie and Tomboy flew to the window, and the authoress sadly gathered up her manuscript and left the room.

''Yes, there it stand,'' cried Nellie; ''come on, all of you; let's us go down and see Melanie's pet. She's always first to see things, ghosts and fairies.''

''She won't come to your room, like that ghost did,'' laughed Melanie, ''so let's hurry down and get a good look at her.'' And downstairs they scudded with a speed that enabled them to squeeze to the front rank of the bevy of sightseers that had begun to gather about the door of the dining hall.

The strange lady, fairy and all, were in Miss Reymar's room, but might come out any moment. The coach at the gate made it probable that the marvel's mother was not going to stay very long.

''But maybe it won't stay, and fly to heaven,'' said Nellie; '' fairies can fly, and it might be gone all at once, like as Melanie's ghost was.''

''Hush now, Miss Chatterbox,'' said Melanie; ''look for yourself, here they come now.''

A richly dressed lady walked toward the house door, and Miss Gunther entered the dining hall, leading a beautiful little girl of five or six years.

"Look, Lilly," said she, "here are your new playmates "

The little lady stopped and looked silently all round. "This is where you eat, isn't it?" she inquired, without the least sign of embarrassment; "when will supper be ready?"

"Why, do angels eat?" laughed Orla Sassuwitch, snatching up the newcomer and kissing her left and right. "Oh, you beauty!"

"My! what big girls," said Lilly, mustering the circle of her admirers; "I want a playmate like me," holding up her little hand about four feet above ground.

"Wait, we make that," laughed Nellie, going down on her knees and bringing her head to a level with the proposed measure; "now you got a playmate already."

"No, I saw you," said Lilly; "but you are pretty, and you, too—" turning to Fanny, who was standing near her friend, "look—you got curls just like mine." Then, after some hesitation, and I seeing no nearer approach to her ideal, "You can play with me if you like."

She took Fanny's hand and was rewarded by another shower of kisses. With her dark-brown curls and black eyes she looked like a little Spanish

gypsy, but her peculiar accent suggested a Swiss or South German origin. She was dressed in white silk, with a scarlet tippet.

"Oh, you darling!" "Isn't she a pet!" "She's just too sweet!" and similar comments descended from all sides, when Miss Reymar entered the room, and promptly recognized the necessity of interference.

"Come, sweet," said she, taking the child's hand. We have to change your dress first, or you might catch cold.

"Please let me stay," begged the little fairy. "I'm not a bit cold; I like those girls."

"You'll be back in a minute, but we must dress you first. Take her to Rosie's room, Miss Gunther; they just carried her things up."

"Let Fanny go along?" suggested the pet.

"All right, you can help dressing her, Fanny."

"No, you others stay," she whispered; the "reason I sent her away was to warn you against a common mistake. She's a very pretty child, but such extravagant compliments would soon spoil her so nobody could get along with her. You must promise me to be kind to her without turning her head with flatteries."

"Where do her folks live?" asked Orla.

"In Vienna, I think," said Miss Reymar; "her father is dead or left her, and her mother is an actress, who has no time to attend to her education."

"Lilly's mother is a very pretty looking," remarked Blue Eyes.

" Why—where did you see her?" asked the principal with a look of surprise.

"Oh, I only saw her go by."

"She had no time to stay any longer," explained Miss Reymar; "all the leave of absence she could get was three days, and she has to go back on the six o'clock express this evening."

The girls were crowding around the principal, who appeared to be in an unusually gracious humor to-day, and was probably herself proud of her new acquisition. Lilly's mother had come from a distance of several hundred miles and selected Willdorf College in preference to scores of boarding-schools nearer home.

At supper the pet, as they all insisted on calling the newcomer, in spite of the principal's protest, showed the same freedom from embarrassment, and had evidently been among strangers before.

"Why, don't you like that?" asked Miss Gunther, when the little fairy pushed away a plate of rye bread; "it's healthy."

"Yes, that may be," admitted Lilly, "but I somehow never could stand the taste of it. I don't like sauerkraut, either"—by way of preventing similar mistakes—"and Limburger cheese—oh, my! It just knocks me a foot back, but maybe it's healthy, too"—with a sly twinkle of her black eyes.

"What do you like?" asked Orla, when the tittering had subsided.

"Oh, lots of things"—confidently; "my mother had caviare sandwiches in her basket, and I ate them all while she was asleep."

"Then we have to send for caviare, right away?"

"Oh, you needn't trouble; I like that, too," pointing at a dish of appledumplings with cold milk; "and you just can't stuff me with buckwheat cakes and syrup."

She ate quite mannerly, too, holding her fork in her left hand and a superfluous knife in her right, but had no hesitation in helping herself from her neighbor's plate, when the main sources of supply happened to be beyond her reach.

"Poor thing," said Flora, "perhaps she has never been away from home before!"

"No, I think they just made a pet of her wherever she went," said Melanie Swartz, with a keener appreciation of cause and effect.

Another month passed, and the approach of Christmas suggested all sorts of projects—bought presents for friends and neighbors, home-made presents for near relatives, and possible journeys during the short vacations.

"Would you like to go and see that Danish family in Warburg, Nellie?" asked Miss Gunther one day, when the girls had finished their darning and some of them still tarried to compare notes on the contents of their work-baskets; "they wrote a few days ago and hinted they would be glad to see you when you have nothing better to do."

"No, I think I stay with Fan," said Blue Eyes, putting her arm around her friend's shoulder; "she has to stay, too, but she take me along when she go for good in a year from now."

"Is that so, Fanny?"

"Yes, I asked the principal to give me a week extra," pouted Miss Tomboy, "but she won't do it, and it's not worth while going so far for half a week. I just wrote to pa and ma to send me something good."

"Oh, I'm glad to have you stay," said the young teacher; "but I thought Fanny was just dying with homesickness."

"Well, so I was," grumbled Tomboy, "but that's

just why I should hate to go back, if I can't stay more than a day or two. It would just break me all up again, I know. I wrote that to pa, and my mother won't mind it, if I send her something nice."

"What are you going to send?"

"I thought I'd buy her a fur shawl; they say this is going to be a hard winter."

"No, no, you ought to send something you made yourself," said Miss Gunther, "no matter if it's a mere trifle; it shows your good-will better than anything money can buy."

Fanny mused. "Would a lily do? I'm painting a rose for my father."

"That would be too near the same plan. Why not make her a little sewing-basket with pincushion and scissor-loops, like the one Anemie is making for her sister?"

"Yes, that would be a good idea," said Fanny; "but suppose I don't know how?"

"Never mind, we all help," said Blue Eyes. "Come on, and I'll show you a piece of blue velvet that would just be the right size for cushion."

The two friends went upstairs, arm in arm, and Miss Gunther went to her own room to examine her scant resources, and plan a few surprises for her best pets.

Christmas Eve came at last, and a pine tree, twelve feet high and bushy enough to hide a rookery, was draped with a miscellany of contributions, gilt pine apples, glass balls, glass pearls, tiny mirrors that reflected the glare of the lights, dolls and toy birds, ginger cakes, gold-paper stars, and candy enough for a country ball. They had even contrived to imitate the traces of a snowstorm, by painting the lower branches with glue and then sprinkling them with table salt.

Wax candles of a dozen different colors were fastened with ingenious little double tacks; but after sweeping the room, and surrounding the tree with a bed of forest-moss, all the youngsters were excluded, and a committee of teachers proceeded to arrange the gift tables.

"Isn't Santa Claus coming soon?" asked the Pet, clinging to Fanny's neck.

"Yes, sweet, I heard the blowing of his horns, far away," said Tomboy, who had begun to please herself in the rôle of protector-general to the little plague; "his deer are galloping all they can, but then, you know, it's a long ways he has to come."

The little fairy nodded her head. "How does he do if there is no snow?" she asked.

"That's bad, he has to wait then," said Fanny;

"but you brought us good luck; didn't it snow all day yesterday!"

"Yes, I like this place," said the Pet; "guess what I got for Christmas last year?"

"A big doll, with curls like yours?"

"No, there was no snow. It was in Vienna; guess again."

"Maybe you got a string of wienerwurst?" suggested Melanie, who had squatted down near Tomboy's feet.

"I pullee you now if you tease me," laughed the Pet, clutching the offender's ears; "no, you never guess; I got a golden nothing and and a silver-wait-awhile; my ma she was so busy she forgot all about me, but she bought me some cakes for New Year."

"No wonder she likes this place better," Melanie whispered to her sister; "if she was mine I'd starve for a week to buy her something nice, and her mother was dressed like a queen."

Flora Hoopole smiled superior. "Oh, I heard what you said; that's all you know about it. You forget that her mother is an actress, an artist; and they cannot be judged by ordinary standards. I know I don't feel like attending to commonplace affairs myself, when my mind is thrilled with poetic inspirations."

"You'd better attend to your shoes, anyhow," remarked Orla sarcastically; "your strings are all dangling again, and the bell will ring in a minute."

Flora sighed. "What a heartless world!" her reproachful eyes seemed to say, but experience had taught her to avoid games of repartee with Orla Sassuwitch.

All this while Pet and Tomboy had been communing in a low whisper. "If Santa Claus forgets you again you come up to my room," said Melanie Swartz, who could not forgive Tomboy's monoply of the general favorite.

"Let me read you a Christmas carol," said Flora, producing a sheet of tinted paper; "perhaps we could sing it in chorus to while time away;" but just then the sound of a silver bell adjourned her project, and the folding doors flew wide open.

A rush and uproar followed, and in the scramble for precedence Peggie Swartz nearly upset the poetess, carol and all.

"Where's Santa Claus?" inquired Pet, when Miss Gunther had picked her up and carried her to her gift-table; "isn't he good, now—did he bring me all this? Say, look at this doll!" she screamed; "it can move its mouth and its eyes! I never saw a doll that could talk, but this one is going to

learn it, I can tell her that. If she don't, I— Oh my, and this sweet handkerchief with flowers in each corner,'' she interrupted herself; ''that's just like the one Fanny got; did Fanny give me this?''

''Maybe she did,'' said Miss Gunther.

''Then I'm going to kiss her anyhow, till I can find Santa Claus,'' looking left and right, and making a dash for her terrestrial benefactress; but Fanny was very busy with her own gift-table, just then, and tried to silence her pet chatterbox with a kiss.

''You beat us all, Fanny,'' said Blue Eyes; ''that's the prettiest fur tip as ever lived, and look at this blue alpaca! Won't that make you nice dress for summer! You will look like fairies in dancing lesson.''

Fanny was rummaging the bottom of her box and looked disappointed. Had her parents not received her last letter, or had it reached them too late? After making out a short list of her own needs, she had added an urgent request to remember Nellie Holden, her roommate and best friend, who was so far from home and had no father or mother.

''Why, Nell,'' said Miss Gunther, putting her hand on Blue Eyes' shoulder, ''why don't you take a look at your own box?''

"My box? Oh, you joking, Miss Gunther," said Nellie. "I'm all alone; Santa Claus he got no time for going to Denmark and back."

But Fanny had pricked up her ears; and Miss Gunther answered her look of inquiry with a mysterious smile. "Who knows?" said the young teacher; "there are fairies, too, for real good girls, and one of them may have remembered you."

"Come on," said Fanny; "let's look around a bit, anyhow, before we give it up."

All the fairy-gifts in sight seemed to have found claimants, but Fanny's keen eyes wandered ahead, and quite at the end of the room she espied an unclaimed table, with a box just about the size of her own.

Blue Eyes descried it about the same time, and they reached the table with a rush. "Didn't I tell you?" cried Tomboy triumphantly. "'Miss Nellie Gray, Willdorf College, Warburg and Hollenbeck Railway;' do you know a girl of that name?"

"Who sent to me this? Oh, Fanny!" with a gleam of suspicion, "you know, tell me, do!"

"I'm not sure," laughed Tomboy; but the contents of the box removed all doubt. Another pair of winter gloves, a copy of Fanny's coral necktie, yes, and a roll of blue alpaca, and a letter-album,

with a picture of a flying carrier pigeon, the very image of Fanny's. And the rubber slip around the album and the assortment of letter-paper also held a little label with five words in a lady's hand:

"To my girl's best friend."

To that compliment there was only one answer, and Blue Eyes kissed her best friend all around the table till they nearly knocked down her gift box. "Your mother is the goodest fairy ever was; no! better as that"—with a gasp for a more adequate word —"she's one angel."

"Yes, she's very good to me," admitted Tomboy, and for the first time with a feeling of sincere gratitude; "I'm going to write her a long letter; this is all her doings, I can see that right away."

Nellie made no reply, but her pretty face became radiant with joy, as she detached the little label and hid it in her bosom.

But the gift surprises were not over yet. Close to the Christmas tree stood a large wash-basket full of sealed packages; the mutual banter presents from girl to girl. They were opened now, and explosions of laughter followed in quick succession.

Flora Hoopole was still pouting because her father had sent her Irving's "Columbus," instead of Keats' "Endymion," when somebody tossed her

a paper bag, inclosing several smaller wrappers, and as a nucleus a long woolen stocking, blue as the sky in June.

"A stocking?" The poetess looked puzzled. "What can that mean?"

"Don't you see it's blue, Miss Blue Stocking?" laughed Orla; "that's the best joke so far."

"Oh, it's yourself sent that?"

"I wish it was," said Orla, when Anemie Bosse burst out tittering in a way that betrayed her complicity.

Flora shook her finger at the culprit, but there came another package: "Miss Flora Hoopole, Poet Laureate."

"That ought to be 'laureata,' and certainly 'poetess,' said the addressee. "I don't feel like opening this at all;" but a clamor of spectators obliged her to proceed, and out fell a broken plaster of paris heart.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Nellie," she cried, promptly identifying the offender; "you had better look at your own bundles!"

"Oh, that's what I am doing all 'long," laughed Blue Eyes, who had already opened half a dozen prize-packages with candy and harmless allusions to her little foibles, when one of the rummagers

handed her another consignment, square and too heavy for a remittance of sweetmeats. A book? yes, a grammar with a flyleaf inscription:

"Study this book by night and day,
You poor, prosaic soul;
To poetry's celestial ray
You will always be blind as a mole."

"Blind? how can I help it?" laughed Blue Eyes; "it's all your fault, Flora. I have to cry so much about people that all fall down dead in your novels I cannot hardly see out of my eyes."

"There!" laughed Orla, "you had better leave Blue Eyes alone after this; she's not half as blind as you thought, is she?"

Melanie Swartz was ogling a little looking-glass, and trying to hide it, package and all, when Peggie pulled it out and held it up before her face: "You know that picture, sis, don't you? You look at it so often that they gave you a chance to carry it in your pocket, now."

"Oh, there's room for it; I don't have to pocket so many snubs, Miss Chatterbox," retorted the self-admirer; "you didn't open your own mail yet, did you?"

"Yes, I did," said Peggie; "oh, hold on, you are

right, here's one little keepsake; it got so covered with paper I did not notice it. It's the size of yours''—handling the memento hesitatingly; ''see, only heavier.''

''Oh, find out and be done,'' said Melanie, tearing off the cover; ''woe is you, Peg—it's a padlock! That just fits your little tattle-trap.''

''Who owns this big thing?'' asked Blue Eyes, turning over a three feet by two box; ''oh, Fan! come here, it's yours; wonder who sent that?''

''Why, what sort of a joke do you call that?'' said Miss Tomboy, searching the box and pulling out handful after handful of hay; ''do they suppose I used to be stall-fed in Allenton?''

She was too happy to-day to lose her temper, and had to laugh at her own conceit, when her explorations were at last rewarded by the discovery of a more substantial gift—a wooden dog, with white paws and a necktie ticket: ''Sweet pup.''

''Oh, that's all right,'' said Fanny, joining in the general laugh. ''I wish it was alive, that's all. ''Whose is this? Why, that's mine, too; they're all good to me to-day,'' laughed Fanny, picking up a covered little basket with her address, but took the precaution to peep, before she opened it.

Apples and apple tree leaves!

"Oh, Nellie, how could you?" she whispered reproachfully.

"Never mind," Blue Eyes whispered back; "hide it before they see it. They're all after some else, now."

A group of sightseers had formed around Anemie Bosse, who was opening a box rivaling the size of Fanny's dog-kennel, and pulled out a wire cage with a live laughing dove.

"Much obliged, whoever sent that," said the recipient, looking all round; "that's the prettiest thing out to-day; isn't it sweet! Oh, Miss Reymar, do—let me keep it?"

"All right," said the principal, smiling; "you can take it up to your room; but be sure and never forget to feed it. You two can have laughing-matches, now."

There was just one box left. "Here, that's yours, Orla," said Melanie; "I thought they wouldn't forget you altogether."

It was a very small package, but the first item of its contents set off another explosion of merriment: a sheet of paper covered with fearful and wonderful hieroglyphics, a burlesque of the Russian letters that often arrived to Miss Sassuwitch's address, but proved manuscripts with seven seals to all her school-

mates. Number two seemed of less evident significance: a small package of cigarettes, not three ounces in weight; but they made Orla blush in a way that attracted the attention of the principal.

"Let's see that—what! That's just a joke, of course; but it's out of place; they are teasing the wrong girl." Then in an undertone: "I hope I'm right, Orla; I rely on you that I can be quite sure of that."

Orla's blushes came and went, but she didn't risk a reply.

"What pitiful pedantry," thought the young Russian; "my little cousin Duchinkski wasn't in her teens yet when she began; but then they are not more than half-civilized in this country."

Her black eye roamed about in search of clews; but she could not even form a suspicion. They were all rather afraid of Orla Sassuwitch.

Lilly alone had been spared; but her little apron could not hold half the sweetmeats that were forced upon her acceptance. Hers was really the happiest face in the gift room that night. "Say, ma'am, do you know what?" said she, when Miss Reymar patted her cheek; "if mother comes to take me away I won't go."

CHAPTER X.

JANUARY would have been the dreariest month in the year, but by a wise arrangement of the college programme the dancing lessons commenced about a week after New Year.

They came off on Saturday, and were what the girls called "hen parties," for three weeks in the four, but on the last Saturday of every month Monsieur Jordan, the dancing master, had permission to invite a number of boys from Professor Ritter's academy on Farway Avenue. On the Fridays preceding these gala days every leisure moment was devoted to preparations; the girls talked dress, changed dress and trimmed dress even in the short intervals of the morning lessons, and in Melanie's room stealthy steps could be heard till long after midnight.

"They are still at it," laughed Tomboy, when Nellie called her attention to the breach of rules. "I wonder where they get all the candles and what they pay Harris to keep his mouth shut. He can't help seeing the light in their windows."

"Perhaps they screen them," conjectured Blue Eyes; "Melanie is very sly, and Orla she know great tricks."

But Nellie, too, made preparations in her own way. She didn't have many dresses to trim, poor thing, but she mended her embroidered dancing-shoes and actually studied the chapter of phrases in Flora's gift book, and had memorized ready-made replies for all possible different questions, both in English and German. But on the first gala day her overconfidence made her trip after all. Her partner, the son of a wealthy Walburg merchant, informed her that his father intended to take him along on a trip to Norway next summer.

"Oh, isn't that good!" exclaimed poor Nell, with her blue eyes beaming; "then you will go to blazes, where they speaks Danish!"

She had several places in her mind where Danish is spoken almost as generally as in Copenhagen—Norway having for centuries been a province of Denmark. Another youth preferred to talk German, and not much of that, till Nellie asked him if he was going to settle in Willdorf after finishing his studies.

"No, my father wants me to go to Geneva, where my uncle is," said the undergraduate.

"*Werden sie da verstaendig sein*?" asked Nellie —"Are you going to be reasonable there?"

She meant "*bestaendig*," *i.e.*, "permanently."

But she danced so well that she had always a choice of partners, and Fanny, too, was in great request on account of her wealth of golden hair and childlike frankness. Gala days did not make her burn midnight candles, but they amused her greatly, and she could not help laughing if she had to die for it when one day Peggie Swartz slipped on her beeswaxed shoes and pulled her partner head over heels on the floor.

Peggie never forgave her, and one day her partner, who had attended gala days the preceding winter, asked her the name of that new girl—the blonde, with long curls, and a blue alpaca dress. Peggie's chance had come.

"That thing? Oh, that's Fanny Malden," she tittered; "we always call her our Tomboy. Yes—that's so, you couldn't have seen her last winter, she came here in July; her father brought her here in a country coach, and what do you think? She had brought her dog along and got fighting mad because Miss Reymar would not let her keep it. And awkward she was! It had to be seen to believe it. At dinner she put her two elbows on the table and

went in feeding like a bear, and one day she dropped a stack of plates, when they wanted her to help in the kitchen. And when they tried to teach her darning her socks——''

"Oh, Peggie,'' said Orla, stopping the stream of revelations, "step this way a minute, dear; one of your pins got loose; I want to fasten your dress for you.''

But the moment she had Miss Chatterbox alone her voice changed to a fierce whisper: "What the mischief are you trying to do, giving away poor Tomboy like that? You ought to be taken out and spanked. Don't you know it's against all rules to talk out of school? That's our own rule, too,'' she added, "and you'll find it out if you don't know it.''

Peggie got so scared that she didn't say another word that afternoon, and slipped away as soon as the last waltz was finished, to change her dress and vanish before Orla got after her again.

Etiquette required the boys to retire at the last squeak of the fiddle, Miss Reymar being anxious to obviate the chance for flirtations, but whisper chat was unavoidable, and almost every Sunday the youngsters contrived to meet the objects of their veneration on their promenades—no matter how

often the march-routes were changed. It greatly puzzled the principal where they could have obtained their information, and she tried the plan of countermanding the Sunday afternoon's programme at the very lodge gate, but the result remained the same, and in some narrow glen of Pine Ridge or lane of Beckor's Cherry Gardens the sophomore caps were sure to emerge; but then Miss Reymar did not know that they had their scouts in the suburbs, watching every point of approach, and that superior topographical knowledge enabled them to guess the plan of campaign from first indications, and reach a convenient ambuscade by roundabout trails of their own.

"If she ask me I could tell her ways to stop it," said Nellie to her roommate one day; "she ought to give Flora leave to drop one of her novels; if they find it and read, it scare them so they never come back again."

Every year, at the close of the season, there was a "ball," though that word might be a little misleading. A "*thé dansant,*" the French would have called it—"a dance and a cup of tea." The boys came a little sooner and stayed an hour longer; there was a second fiddle; holly and boxwood garlands and a table with tea and cold lunch; that was all.

Still, next to Christmas, it was about the most important holiday in Willdorf College, and Miss Reymar would have provoked a mutiny if she had not permitted the girls to wear their best Sunday dresses.

On the evening before the momentous event Nellie and Tomboy were accordingly deep in dry goods, when Pet Lilly danced into their room and at once installed herself on the lap of her favorite.

"I can go along to-morrow," she reported, putting her arm around Fanny's neck; "Miss Reymar said so, and I'm going to wear my white satin dress and a red scarf."

"Why, Pet, how hot you feel!" said Fanny, patting the little visitor's face. "Are you sick, or have you been running in the garden?"

"My head aches," said the little thing, putting her hand to her temple, "but to-morrow I'm going to dance"—with a swift return to her original theme; "Miss Reymar said so, and I want you to come, too."

"Oh, to be sure, we all go," said Fanny; "but you must be good now and not go and get sick."

But she did both. "Then I'm going to run to bed right away," said she, after a pause of reflection; "to-morrow I want to be well again and put on my white dress."

"Where is Pet, I wonder?" the girls asked one another at breakfast the next morning.

Miss Gunther, too, was missing.

All that morning, while the building was buzzing with preparations, she was sitting at Lilly's sick bed, fanning the little sleeper's face, and every now and then cooling her brow with a wet sponge.

She had been taken with a hot fever that night, and Mrs. Scoffield, the stewardess, who had volunteered to nurse her, had not improved matters by keeping up a bake-oven fire till morning. In spite of her protests, the principal had opened a window at daybreak, and the champion of sweat-box cures went off grumbling.

"I wish this ball could be postponed," said Miss Gunther after dinner; "she's getting worse, I can see that too plainly. Hadn't we better send for another doctor?"

"I sent for Dr. Harman an hour ago," said the principal, looking at her watch; "the messenger said he would be here directly after dinner. But it's too late now to countermand the ball, and besides, we can shift her bed to your own room, where there is not any risk of noise. I hope this isn't anything worse than a catarrh fever; she may have caught it by running in the kitchen so often and out

again in the garden. That's the worst about pretty children; they overpet them till you can't make them behave."

They waited another half-hour and then carried the little patient to Miss Gunther's room, where the noise of the ball would be deadened by half a dozen intervening walls.

"Here come the musicians," whispered Miss Gunther, who had stepped to the window when the principal had brought her a few refreshments.

"Yes, I told the steward to take them a lunch," said Miss Reymar.

"Say, it's time for me to dress, now," said Lilly, suddenly sitting up in bed; "better hurry and get me my things; Fanny is waiting."

"Yes, yes, dear," said Miss Reymar, "we'll tell you in time"—hearing a prelude of the piano, "they are just trying their music and putting things in order; when all is ready we'll tell you; but you must try and sleep now, so your head stops aching."

"What makes it ache so?" asked Pet; "I've been good and slept all I could, but it won't stop; it won't stop."

She had just fallen asleep again when Dr. Harman at last arrived. He sat down at the bedside

and took the sleeper's hand, while Miss Gunther watched his face in anxious expectation.

"She has a fever," said he at last; "could you screen her bed and open a window for a few minutes?"

He then made out a prescription and promised to call again before night. "Don't let the thermometer get above seventy," said he before he left.

"There!" said Miss Reymar, as soon as he was gone, "didn't I tell you? Not above seventy! It was about a hundred and seventy when I opened the door this morning. And that woman pretends to have been a hospital nurse! I pity her patients! No wonder every hospital has a cemetery, if they all do like that."

Miss Reymar soon after was summoned to the ballroom, and the arrival of the dancing-master was the cue of the young academicians who had been waiting at the lodge gate.

Miss Gunther had taken up a book, when the music struck up, and almost in the same instant Lilly raised herself on her elbow and looked at the door.

"Hurry up, Fanny," she cried, "we're all ready; I want you to come and help me dress!"

"She's coming, sweet," said Miss Gunther;

"listen! I hear her walk around, getting your things ready."

Lilly made no reply, but half-turned her head, listening.

"She didn't hear me, did she? Why doesn't she come? Say, I'm going to find her if she doesn't come soon"—trying to get up and leave the room.

Miss Gunther rang the bell, and after a considerable pause the cook put in an appearance, the two other servants being engaged at the other end of the building. "Call Fanny, quick," said Miss Gunther, "and then run and call Dr. Harman. Tell him the child is much worse—just look at her eyes; her mind is wandering. But say, call Fanny in a way not to scare the rest if you can; they might all come rushing in here."

"All right," said the cook, and made up her mind not to enter the ballroom at all. People came and went continually, and she could bide her time.

Bridget stood and waited nearly ten minutes, before at least the door opened and the twins came out, arm in arm, chatting and laughing.

"Is Miss Fanny in there?" asked the cook.

"Why, of course—they all are; we just peeped out because it's so terribly warm. Why, who wants her?"

"Please call her out here a minute," said the cook. "Miss Gunther sent me in a hurry, but I'm not dressed and didn't like to go in."

"I'll fetch her," said Melanie, but had not yet delivered her errand, when Monsieur Jordan ordered his pupils to their places, and again Bridget waited at least ten minutes, before at last Fanny Malden came out, flushed with merriment and waltzes. Bridget lowered her voice to a whisper, seeing faces peeping through a hall window, and Fanny at once darted off to Miss Gunther's room.

"Oh, child! I do wish you had come a little sooner," said the young teacher; "this poor little thing has been calling for you till she fretted herself in a raving fever. Oh, Heaven! there! look at her—she's going in convulsions now!"

Lilly had fallen back on the pillow, and lay twisting from side to side, frothing and clutching her hands.

Fanny burst out sobbing.

"If you had only come a little sooner," resumed Miss Gunther; "I sent Bridget nearly half an hour ago; didn't she tell you?"

"Why, Miss Gunther!" said Fanny, surprised; "I came running the moment she told me the first word."

"Dear me! wherever can she have been so long? You might as well send a tortoise! Say, Fanny, dear, promise me to stay here till I get back; I'm going after the doctor myself."

Lilly's hands began to twitch again, but presently her rolling eyes became fixed and she seemed to listen. "There goes the music again, Fan," said she, clutching at her friend's sleeve. "Did you bring my dress? Miss Reymar said I could go. Why can't we go, Fanny?"

"We will, we will, sweet," sobbed Fanny, "only keep still; we have to wait till Miss Gunther comes back, and then we fetch your white dress."

"No, better hurry, get it now, before it is too late! I've to go soon; I've to go far away, and you can't find me no more then."

Fanny heard a sobbing sound and felt somebody's head on her shoulder. Melanie Swartz had entered the room as noiselessly as a spirit.

"Oh, Fanny! what happened? Is she dying? I saw Miss Gunther run down the street without her hat on, and I knew right away what they called you for. Are you nursing her?"

"They want me to help," sobbed Fanny.

"They'll run me out if they come," said Melanie, "but you know what I do for you, Fanny? You

can manage Pet better than anybody, and if you won't let her die I'll give you all I got; I've twelve dollars in my drawer, and you shall have them all."

"I'd give all I have, too," sobbed Fanny, "but I don't know what to do. I wish that doctor would hurry up."

"There comes Miss Gunther now," said Melanie.

But it was Mrs. Scoffield, the old stewardess.

"How's the child getting on?" she inquired; then, advancing upon the bed: "You had better keep her covered up ;she's got a badcold, poorthing."

At the first touch of her hand Lilly drew back and buried her face in the pillows. "Do nothing to me, please! Do nothing to me!" she repeated again and again, with her plaintive voice gradually rising to screams.

Melanie gave the intruder a venomous look.

"What's you two doing in here?" asked the stewardess.

"That's none of your business," snapped the Swartz girl.

"You'd better go, or you'll get me scolded; Miss Gunther told me not to let anybody in here," said Fanny, foreseeing a quarrel and venturing upon a bold interpretation of her instructions.

"Oh—is that it? you want to show you have

something to say, don't you," sneered the old hag, and flounced out of the room.

"Take her away," whimpered Lilly; "don't let her grab me!"

"She's gone; she can't hurt our little angel now."

"Say, Fanny, when I'm an angel I can fly," said Lilly; "then I come to you; then they can't keep us locked up all day; we'll be playing on the mountains then, where you and me picked strawberries last summer. And you musn't forget me; when they have buried me you must come where they made me a little grave, so poor Pet isn't all alone" —stretching out her arms to her two friends.

Melanie Swartz burst out crying. "I can't stand this no longer," said she, and staggered toward the door.

She was not gone five minutes when Miss Gunther returned with the doctor, and found Fanny kneeling on the floor, with her face on the bed and crying as if her heart would break.

Lilly was in convulsions again.

"You can go now, dear," said Miss Gunther kindly; "please tell one of the girls to call Miss Reymar."

"Have you her parents' address?" inquired Dr. Harman, when the principal entered the sick room.

"Yes, her mother's; her father is dead, I believe," said Miss Reymar; "why? do you suppose we had better let her know——"

"Yes, telegraph at once," said the doctor; "that child has a brain fever, and we must take no chances if her mother should wish to see her once more."

That set off Miss Gunther, too, but the principal preserved her self-control, and meeting Professor Althoff in the hall, at once explained the situation and requested him to send a message to Vienna, care of the Hof Theater, and another to Mrs. Welser's private address in a south Vienna suburb.

The reply came by wire the next morning:

"Impossible to start before Monday. Shall reach Willdorf Tuesday night."

But early on Sunday morning Miss Gunther came up to Nellie's room. She beckoned her and Fanny to the window, and a moment after Peggie Swartz, who had been eavesdropping for her sister, heard the two girls sob aloud. "Don't tell anybody, dear," said the young teacher when she left the room; "they will find it out too soon, anyhow."

They had been conversing in a whisper, but half an hour later all Willdorf College knew that Lilly Welser had died at two o'clock that morning.

CHAPTER XI.

Miss Reymar had sent a second telegram and the reply came by mail: a letter written in a paroxysm of grief, but ending with a request to excuse the personal attendance of the writer. She inclosed a check and ordered a monument with a kneeling angel and a gilt inscription: "Pray for me, sweet child."

Lilly was buried on Tuesday afternoon. There was no florist in Willdorf, but nearly all the children of the little town had been searching the hills for spring flowers, and the coffin was covered with snowdrops and violets.

"Isn't it strange none of her folks would come?" said Fanny to her friend when they returned to their room.

"Yes; your mother would have come from the world end," said Nellie; "I know she would."

Fanny nodded her head. "I know it, too," said she, "and she isn't even my right mother, and I didn't always treat her right, Nell."

"Oh, she know you was just a baby Tomboy," said Nellie; "but you got sense now, and you ought to write her a letter. Then you see if she don't answer right away; she's so good."

"Yes, I'll do that," said Fanny, after some reflection; "I'll write to pa and her both, and tell them I had time on account of the half-holiday, and let them know what happened."

"Do it right now," said Nellie. "Miss Gunther told me she excuse us from coming down this evening."

Fanny had just written the first line, when Flora Hoopole came in with a formidable manuscript.

"It kept me awake all night to think of an appropriate title," said she, by way of introducing her poem, "but I'm glad to say I succeeded: 'Stanzas on the Death of a Storm-blighted Rosebud;' in four different meters; you can then tell me which you think you like best.

" 'Night winds weeping tears, not dewdrops,'" she began, but didn't get a chance to add another word.

"Oh, hush!" cried Nellie, stopping her ears; "I don't feel listening to your ghastly nonsense now; go away, we got no time."

"That's so, Flora," said Fanny; "we're very busy, just now, so you will please excuse us."

"Oh, certainly," sneered the poetess, "I'm so glad to find it out in time when people have sausage bags instead of souls"—returning her MSS. to a map with the inscription: "Dirges and Elegies."

"You don't deserve to hear first-class poetry, and I'll be glad if Easter comes and I can leave this abode of prose."

"Bolt the door before she comes back with a novel," said Nellie, whose patience had limits.

Fanny's letter was mailed the next morning, but a week passed and no reply had yet reached the Willdorf post office. Fanny began to fret, but Nellie kept up her hopes. "They got your letter, no doubt of that; they just wait to get ready with some present before they writes; don't worry; there may be answer this evening."

And that prediction was actually fulfilled; in the afternoon mail came a letter for Fanny Malden.

"Come to my room, Fanny," said the principal after supper, "there's news for you from Allenton."

"At last," thought Fanny; "wonder what she wants?"

"There's a letter from your father, dear," said the principal, after closing her door; "he asks me to warn you that there's great good news for you. Now tell me: can you guess what it is?"

Fanny shook her head. She was too excited to speak.

"A new pet came to Allenton; you have got a little brother, Fanny."

"Oh, my heavens!" shrieked Fanny, and before the principal could read the first word of the squire's letter Miss Tomboy had her around the neck and kissed her violently again and again.

Then her arms dropped and she stepped back, blushing and wondering at her indiscretion. "Please excuse me, Miss Reymar," she stammered, but Miss Reymar closed her mouth with another kiss.

"Come here, dear," said she, drawing her to her heart; "let me be the first to congratulate you. And now you can run and tell Blue Eyes; here are two letters for you."

Miss Reymar had never talked to her like that before, and Fanny felt like hugging her for her own sake this time, but after a moment's hesitation she darted out, even forgetting to close the door, and rushed up to her own room.

"Listen to this, Nell," she cried, waving her letters in triumph; "you're a good prophet, Blue Eyes; yes, you were right, this was worth waiting for; now listen."

"My dear child," wrote Mrs. Malden, "about the same time when the angels came and took one of their little sisters away from Willdorf they brought a little brother to Allenton, and on receipt of your pretty letter I felt as if Heaven had blessed me twice though I always knew my naughty Tomboy would find the way to my heart sooner or later. And now do not worry about bygones, dear; they are forgiven and forgotten; rather think of the future—the happy time that will bring our dear truant back to the playgrounds of her childhood. You will be received with open arms and with a thousand kisses by

"YOUR MAMMA."

"Didn't I tell!" chuckled Nellie.

"Yes and here's another:

"'DEAR PET: It's settled now and you must come back on the first of September and help us romp around and have a good time. You never saw a prettier little rogue unless you remember the day when you took a peep in the first looking-glass; his brown eyes are just like yours and I can tell by the way he clutches my hair that he's going to be a good hand at climbing trees with my Tomboy.

"I'll write again in a day or two, and remain

"YOUR PLAYMATE AND LOVING FATHER."

"Oh, dear Nell," cried Fanny, "what I wouldn't

give if I could see that little darling! I feel like starting right away and never stop running till I get him in my arms. Wonder what room they have put him in? I just can't wait till September; I know I can't, and I'll slip up on them some day when they don't look for me."

Easter came, and the girls received copies of the semi-annual reports that had been mailed to their parents.

Nellie came to her room crying. "Look at this," said she: " 'Progress in languages: middling,' and I've tried so hard to do my best with your old English and German."

"Yes, but see: your report is as good as it can be in everything but languages," said Fanny, "so that will more than make up for it."

But Nellie shook her head. "I have to be a governess as soon as I know enough to make my own living," she sighed, "and you will find out they make me stay behind next vacation and take private lessons."

"Will Professor Althoff stay, too?" asked Fanny.

Nellie blushed. "That wouldn't be so bad," she whispered, "but I am afraid he will be gone somewhere and old Mrs. Lead will stay because nobody invites her."

Flora Hoopole felt deeply wronged. "The idea!" she said, "giving me a number two in literature after my years of literary labors! Mr. Althoff is hard to please, certainly. Won't he be surprised, though, when he reads that dramatic poem?"

Flora referred to her last literary product: "Thekla, the Flower Fairy," now in the hands of Professor Althoff. She had finished it a few days ago, and forwarded it in a rose-colored wrapper, with the request to revise it and kindly call her attention to possible defects, as it was to be acted next week on the afternoon of the principal's birthday. That part of the birthday programme was as yet Flora's secret, but she wished the professor to infer that the festival committee had urged her to undertake a task beyond the ability of her fellow-pupils. Even the first verse, she imagined, would suffice to establish the competence of the author:

"Wondrous odors, gently flowing
O'er a garden's verdant lawn,
Ere the cocks have started crowing,
Ere the ducks suspect the dawn."

There were about five hundred such verses altogether, and the names of the dramatic persons were nearly all as sublime as the rhymes: "Eldreth, the mountain elf," "Linda, the mermaid of the

lagoons,'' ''Ariel and Astarte, morning air spirits,'' etc., etc. The poetess had already memorized the role of the flower queen, and in her daydreams could hear the salvos of applause and see the homage of her subordinates—the belated but finally perfect triumph of true genius.

She was just rehearsing the last scene when there was a sharp tap at the door, and Peggie's voice outside, demanding admittance.

''Oh, that prosaic thing! In a moment like this!'' groaned the poetess, and felt greatly tempted to refuse herself to such callers.

''Here's your poem,'' cried Peggie; ''d'ye want it or not?'' Flora opened the door.

''Who the mischief was you talking to?'' asked Peggie, looking about with a surprise not unmixed with suspicion.

Flora made no reply, but seeing the rose-colored package in Peggie's hands snatched it away with an exclamation of dismay.

''Why! where did you get this?'' she demanded angrily.

'' Get it? What's the matter with you? Didn't you give it to Professor Althoff?'' asked Peggie; ''well, he told me to hand you this, or leave it in your room.''

"Why didn't he send for me? I'm pretty sure that's what he meant to do, and you had to stick in your snout with a different plan. Well, you can go, now. I'm busy and want to be left alone."

But Peggie was in no hurry. She scented a secret, and calmly sat down in Flora's armchair of inspiration. "I ain't going yet," she announced.

"You like that chair, do you?" said Flora; "all right, you can stay as long as you please, but in that case"—approaching the door—"I'll have to bid you good-by."

And before the intruder could guess her intention she had stepped out and turned the key.

You had better open that door," cried Peggie, but the poetess was already at the foot of the stairs, and seeing the coast clear, slipped out in the garden to her place of refuge under the willow tree.

There she paused and pressed her hand to her tumultuous heart. A message from Professor Althoff—he had read, he must have read her masterpiece. Her hands trembled as she opened the package. What! No letter? Not a scrap of a note? Should he have recorded his verdict on the title page of the manuscript or perhaps suggested a change in the cast of characters that rather exceeded the number of the available actors? Yes, that was the pro-

fessor's handwriting, a blue pencil note on the first page: "Unmitigated nonsense—all except one strikingly satisfactory paragraph—see page 96."

"Ninety-six? That must be in the last scene—Oh, I see, he means the 'Swan Song of the White Lily,'" thought Flora, turning the leaves with nervous fingers—but, oh, heavens! page 96 was the last, and the professor's blue pencil had traced a ring around two words: "The end."

The poetess clinched her fist, but in spite of her struggles her overwrought feelings found relief in a flood of tears.

"He can't have read it," she moaned, "he can't possibly have read that heavenly intermezzo where the moon rises and two spirits of light sweep down

> " '—descended from the groves
> Perch on the lawn roller like snow-white doves.'

He has just glanced at a quotation from inferior poets," thought Flora, "and ascribed their shortcomings to my own negligence! But if he will not see he shall hear. I'll read him those inspired passages and demand justice or death"—waving her hands theatrically. She was about to rise and rush into the slanderer's presence, when she realized the possibility of fainting at the critical moment.

"No!" she hissed, "he shall never see my weakness! Never! But I can write, and I will write."

She drew out her notebook and had already covered a page with words that threatened to set the paper afire, when she heard a titter behind her shoulder, and had just time to close her tablet, when Peggie Swartz hopped into her leafy sanctum.

"You thought I couldn't get out, did you?" she laughed; "but here I am and— Halloo, I got you!" she cried, pouncing upon the manuscript and darting off with her prize. "Now I'll find out your secrets in spite of you!" she laughed, stopping at a safe distance and holding up the telltale package.

"Say, give me that," cried the poetess, rising; "give me that, please? You can have my Christmas present, Irving's 'Columbus,' if you do!"

"Too late, too late!" laughed Peggie, dancing toward the house, and the bereft poetess felt her heart stand still with horror at the thought of the consequences if Nellie or Orla should get their eyes on those blue pencil marks. They would tease the life out of her. Peggie was at it even now, turning the leaves and spying here and there, and Flora suddenly made a rush in the desperate hope of running down the robber in time. But Peggie saw her too soon, and hastily closing the drama, fled shriek-

ing up the terrace, but at the very edge of the door ran into the arms of Professor Althoff.

The rose-colored wrapper would have told its own tale, even if Peggie had looked less scared.

"What are you doing?" said he reproachfully; "didn't I ask you to take this to Flora's room?"

"I did," stammered Peggie, "but she got mad at me and locked me up, so I—I just snatched her book to scare her a little and get even."

"Just a little, eh? Look there what you did; she's crying."

"She thought I was going to read her secrets," tittered Peggie; "but you know, I was just joking" —confidentially—" you know it would kill a body to read a page of that rot."

Professor Althoff smiled. "Never mind, now, let me have that;" taking the manuscript out of her hands.

"Here's your fairy book, Miss Hoopole," said he with a suppressed smile, and in the paroxysm of her gratitude the poetess kissed his hand.

"I thank you, sir," she lisped, and stalked back to her sanctuary under the weeping willow.

"Poor, crazy kid," muttered the professor, "and the worst of it is she's incurable; she's at it again; more moonshine smiling on patent lawn-rollers."

There were songs and recitations on Miss Reymar's birthday, and at four o'clock the guests were turned loose in the garden, where Mr. Harris had erected a large platform for a free lunch table; but in the midst of the merrymaking Nellie took her friend's arm and walked slowly to the opposite end of the orchard, where a rustic arbor with a bench or two afforded a view of the blue highlands.

"I feel like crying, Fan," said she sadly; "this is the last fun you and I will have together; in little while your pa come and take you away, and then I——"

The tears did start to her eyes, and she put her head on Fanny's shoulder.

"Don't cry, Blue Eyes," coaxed Fanny; "it's nearly five weeks yet, and you know I'll never forget you."

"Only four week and four days," sobbed Nellie, "and you can't help forget me if you go to that pretty place where your pets lives and your little brother——"

"Why, Nell, don't talk like that"—with a kiss or two. "Allenton isn't on the other side of the sea, and you must come and see us every vacation. You know my father likes you, too."

"Yes, but I can't," sighed Nellie; "they won't

let me, and if I'm done I have to go and teach howl-babies; oh, my! maybe in England or Russia.''

Fanny had to laugh in her own despite.

''We won't forget you one day, Blue Eyes,'' she promised, ''and as soon as they are done with you here you let us know, and we get your room ready. Then they can write to Allenton if they want you, and don't you go till they offer you a good place.''

Nellie kissed her friend, but refused to be comforted.

''You don't know, dear,'' she sighed, ''there's so many of them, so many that want a place and so few places; a poor girl has to take what there is.''

''Don't cry anyhow,'' said Fanny, now with tears in her own eyes; ''we can talk all that over, and I tell my pa; he knows a good many folks, maybe he can help us a bit. Oh, mercy! here comes that monkey of a Swartz girl and a whole gang of them.''

''Here they are,'' cried Peggie Swartz; ''I thought I'd find you. What makes you hide like that?''

''Oh, nothing,'' said Fanny.

''Why, what's the matter with you two,'' asked Orla; ''you look as solemn as a pair of wood-owls, sitting here in the bushes; we looked for you everywhere; you are not hatching moonshine poetry, are you? It looks like you had been crying.''

Peggie had to settle that fact. "Yes, come here," said she, taking a close-range peep at Nellie's eyes; "there's no doubt of it; why, what's up?"

"Don't ask such questions, you impudent little skit," interposed Flora Hoopole; "you would not know what they mean if they should tell you that the song of the wood-thrush and the soft evening wind opened the fountains of their tears! Every morning is a new birth, but evening is the dying hour of the day, when tender souls weary of frivolities. Do you know what I said in my 'Hymn to the Setting Sun:'

> "'The westward winds are wafting my farewell
> To yonder——'"

"Say, I'll give you a nickel if you let us off," interrupted Orla; "you ought to be locked up every time the moon gets too full."

"Now don't," protested Nellie, who had laughed till her eyes filled with tears of a different sort. "Why, Flora, you got the tenderest soul as ever lived. Accept our thanks, you tall poetess, you have understood of us."

"Thanks to Heaven this is my last week!" said Flora. "I might as well talk to wooden dolls."

"We'll miss you so we will never laugh again," said Fanny.

But Fanny's own last week came before long, and the two friends often sat at the apple-tree window till midnight, whispering and hatching plans for the future. The last night Blue Eyes hardly slept a wink, and Fanny could hear her sob to her pillow.

"Say, Nell," whispered Fanny when she woke up and found her friend ready dressed, the next morning, "I have been talking to Miss Gunther, yesterday, and she says governesses get vacations, they all do; a month every year, and sometimes two months; so you see there will be a chance for you to visit us, no matter what happens. Now this may be the last time you and I can have a word alone, so you must promise me right now to keep your word and spend your next free month in Allenton."

"Yes, I promise what I can," stammered Nellie; "only you know, I'm so poor."

"Oh, and won't we have a good time!" continued Fanny, ignoring her friend's misgivings. "You never saw such playgrounds and such easy-going folks; they don't expect you to dress up for them every day, bless your soul, no! I used to run around with my stockings down and half my sleeves torn off, and the kids liked me all the better for it, and I do think my father, too. He just hates

fashion dolls and likes his visitors to be at ease and make themselves at home. And our house, it's so large you can hardly count the rooms; almost like a castle. We have horses, too, and I'll drive you around in our dogcart every day, and in the evening we'll see who can climb the highest, and we'll steal apples, like we did the night Miss Lead came up in a gypsy dress."

They both had to laugh at that recollection, and when the bell rang they went down to Fanny's last breakfast, arm in arm, and without any visible after-effects of their tearful vigils.

"Here's a letter from your father, dear," said the principal; "they have visitors at Allenton, and he writes he cannot possibly get away this morning, but he doesn't want you to wait on account of that; you are to go by rail as far as Ellerbeck, and there you will find friends at the depot—some acquaintances of your father's that will take care of you that night and take you down to Allenton to-morrow morning."

"Ellerbeck? Wonder who that can be?" mused Fanny. "I did hear the name of that place before, but it's a long time ago."

"There's a long letter for you, too," said Miss Reymar, "that will tell you all about it. Your

train starts here a little after eleven, and at two o'clock you'll be in Ellerbeck; you change cars at Westdorp, where they stop for dinner."

"Oh, dear! I can never remember all that," laughed Fanny; "let me see that letter, please, so I can get it all by heart and make no mistake. If I get lost," she added, "I'll walk back to Nellie, and then you will never get rid of me till all the pears and grapes are gone."

"And you will always be welcome," said the principal, stroking her long curls; "you have two homes in the world now, you mustn't forget that."

A little before eleven Miss Gunther came in and announced the arrival of the omnibus. There was only one good hotel at Willdorf, and their depot omnibus often stopped at private residences for the accommodation of the neighbors.

"Get your satchels, dear," said Miss Gunther, but Fanny's friends crowded in to save her that trouble. They had all got fond of their tomboy, and loaded her basket with keepsakes, sweetmeats and bouquets enough for a wedding feast.

"Don't forget us, Fan!" "Be sure now and write!" they cried in chorus when Fanny and the young teacher followed Nellie to the omnibus. Nellie had

run ahead with the satchels, and of course insisted on going along to the depot.

The train was on time. "Let's hurry and find her a good seat," said Miss Gunther; "wonder if this is the ladies' car?"

"Plenty room, right here, come in, come in," a party of students cried from the smoking car, and Miss Gunther at once realized her mistake.

"The next car, dear," said she, but the acclaims of the madcap crowd pursued them to the next platform:

"What a fairy!" "No, that's the goddess of fortune!" "Ceres with her cornucopia!—fruit and flowers!"

"Be quick, dear," whispered the young teacher. "It's too bad your father couldn't come," said she, looking along the row of seats, with nothing but strangers in sight, but just before the train started an old lady with a large valise came along and inquired after the car to Walburg. "She's going your way," whispered Miss Gunther, and stepped out on the platform to assist her Godsent up the steep steps. "Would you do me the great kindness to let this child sit near you, madam?" she asked; "it's the first time she travels alone; she's going to Ellerbeck."

"Why, that's right on my way; I'm so glad I found company," said the old lady, promptly assuming the role of chaperon *pro tem;* "just put your satchels and things in here, dear; there's plenty of room, by good luck, and we can sit together and have a good chat."

Miss Gunther heaved a sigh of relief. "Good-by, then, sweet," said she, kissing her Allenton pet left and right; "now take care of yourself and don't you forget what you promised me yesterday evening. I do wish I could go along; but here goes the bell; come on, Blue Eyes, we have to go"—tapping the shoulder of poor Nellie, who was sobbing aloud and clinging to her friend in a last embrace.

Fanny, too, was crying, pressing her face in a corner of the window, and when the conductor came along the old lady had to whisper in her ear to make her produce her ticket. For ten minutes or more she left her in peace, after that, knowing from experience that transient sorrows exhaust themselves easiest in tears. Only when Fanny brightened up of her own accord, and cast wistful eyes at a troop of romping children near the depot of the next station, she thought it time to redeem her promise to the young teacher.

"Will you reach home to-night, dear?" asked she

kindly. "I suppose you live in Ellerbeck, or near by?"

"Yes, only eight miles," said Fanny; "I'll get there to-morrow noon, I think; I have to stay at Judge Berger's place to-night."

"Bergers? oh, I think I know them; yes, to be sure, he's judge of the district court," said the old lady; "my husband used to be their family physician when they lived in Walburg; but they bought a pretty country place on the Stanberg road a few years ago. That's only a short piece from Ellerbeck. Where do your folks live?"

"Near Allenton, close to Warren's Bridge on Pine Creek."

"I was near there five years ago," said the old lady, "and I remember the splendid beech woods along the pike road; it's a very pretty country in summer time."

"Isn't it!" said Fanny proudly, and the gates of small talk were opened. Fanny informed her chaperon that Squire Malden owned two hundred acres of those beech woods, and described her native grange from the roof turrets to the carp pond at the lower end of the garden.

"Westdorp," shouted the conductor. "Change cars for Ellerbeck, Warburg and Rohn Springs."

At the same time the bell of the depot restaurant rang out an invitation to dinner.

"Let's go to the waiting-room, dear," said the old lady; "we two have plenty of lunch along, and it would be a sin to waste a quarter on their bullhide beefsteaks."

Fanny assented, but only nibbled a biscuit or two, and every now and then ran out to watch the preparation for the departure of the local train.

"There! Somebody went in already," said she, when the first dinner-guests returned; "the doors are open, I think."

The old lady smiled. "You are anxious to get home," said she; "but all right, let's see if we can get a good seat again."

They did have their pick of half a hundred reclining chairs, but had to wait and chat nearly half an hour before the train finally started, with not more than half the seats occupied.

At two o'clock they reached Ellerbeck.

"This is where you get off, dear," said the old lady; "I wish I could take you along, but the Bergers would never forgive me. Their coach is waiting, I know, and probably the old judge came along himself."

But there was no coach in sight. A few farmers

with their consignments of country produce, a couple of haltered horses, the local postmaster with his mailbags, but no coach.

"There must be some mistake," said the old lady; "are you sure they were to meet the noon train?"

"I don't know," said Fanny rather helplessly, "but I did all my father says in this letter," clutching a piece of crumpled paper for constant reference. "No, there's nobody here," said she when the baggagemen handed down her big trunk; "but all my things are here now, so I had better get my satchels."

"Why, certainly," said the chaperon; "wait, let me get down, too; maybe some of these people know. Did you see a coach around here, sir?" she asked the postmaster—"Judge Berger's coach from Stanberg? There's a young lady here looking for them."

"There was a hack here half an hour ago," said the postmaster after some reflection, "but it's gone now; they brought some ladies from Rohn Springs."

"Now what am I going to do?" laughed Fanny, though she felt more like crying. "They forgot all about it, it seems."

"Maybe they didn't know about the change of

train time,'' suggested the postmaster; ''this train use to leave Westdorp half an hour later.''

''There! that explains it,'' said the old lady; ''don't fret, dear, run to the corner of the depot, there; you can see away up the road; probably you'll see them coming.''

''All aboard!'' sang out the conductor, and Fanny's chaperon had to leave her to her fate. ''Please send that child to Berger's in a hack if nobody comes,'' she whispered to the postmaster; ''the judge will pay you well.''

CHAPTER XII.

THE train had rattled around the bend, and Fanny and the Ellerbeck postmaster were consulting in the waiting-room, when a family coach came down the road at a sharp trot, stopped for a moment near the opposite end of the depot, and then turned into a side road toward the village hotel.

"Would you know the Bergers if you saw them?" inquired Fanny, who realized the necessity of self-help.

"Why, yes," said the postmaster, "they used to get their mail here, and I see the judge almost every week, but I'm sure I didn't see him to-day. Now I tell you what we had better do; just sit down and take it easy a few minutes till I can get my mail to the office, and then I let my clerk attend to it and get back here as quick as I can. If nobody comes by three o'clock, we will get you a hack."

"I'm so much obliged to you," said Fanny, "but I'm afraid there's something wrong; maybe they

never got my father's letter, and might not be home when we come there."

"No danger of that," laughed the postmaster; "just keep your seat for a minute or two."

But Fanny could not "take it easy." The moment her new protector was gone she left the waiting-room to take another look at the Stanberg pike road.

"Did you see a child around here?" a young man of twenty or twenty-two years asked the clerk in the ticket office; "she ought to have come in on the Westdorp train."

"Not on this train," said the clerk; "I was out on the platform and didn't see anybody get off except two ladies. They were talking to the postmaster, and then went back in the cars, I think."

The young man looked puzzled. "No baggage put off here, either?" he inquired.

"Let me see—yes, there's a trunk out there," said the clerk, "and one of those ladies had a satchel and a basket; but I don't know where they left them."

The young man took a look at the trunk. "Why, that's hers!" he muttered, looking up and down the road; "maybe *she* knows"—noticing a stranger at the other end of the depot.

Fanny was walking slowly back toward the waiting-room, when she heard steps in the gravel path and turned half around.

"Oh, madam, excuse me—allow me one minute."

But Fanny increased her speed. The impudence of those students had jarred her nerves, and Miss Gunther had warned her repeatedly never to notice strangers on the public street—young men especially. "Just act as if you didn't hear them," was Miss Gunther's advice.

"Did you see a little child from Willdorf College get off here, madam?" asked her pursuer, and Fanny at last stopped. Could that be Judge Berger? Impossible! But what did he know about Willdorf College?

"Who are you looking for?" asked Fanny, to settle the main question.

"They sent me here to meet a child from Willdorf—Squire Malden's little daughter," said the stranger, "and I see her trunk was put off here; did you happen to see her on the train? I'm getting afraid she missed her station and went on to Walburg."

" 'Sent me,' he says," thought Fanny—"perhaps he comes from Berger's. I might as well tell him my name—but——"

"There wasn't a passenger of that age on the train, was there?" resumed the stranger.

" I don't know," said Fanny, "but I'm Squire Malden's daughter."

"Miss Malden? Why, isn't this a regular comedy of errors?" laughed the young man, "then permit me to introduce myself—did your papa mention his old friends—Judge Berger's folks, that were going to meet you here?"

"Yes, he did; here's his letter," cried Fanny; "but you are not——"

"The old judge? No, I'm only his son"—taking off his hat; "all's well that ends well, Miss Malden; and now you must allow me to explain my mistake: Your papa wrote the day before yesterday and asked us to 'meet his little girl,' so we were looking for a baby or a child of nine or ten years."

"And you must have taken me for an overgrown baby only a minute ago!" laughed Fanny; "the idea! that I was running away from the very folks I tried to find! Is the judge coming?"

"He was on the point of starting, but sprained his foot through being in too much of a hurry when we found out the train time had been changed. There was no time for my mother to dress, so they

had to send me; I'm Leo Berger, the judge's eldest son, Miss Malden, and I trust you will excuse my awkwardness—under the circumstances."

"Why, you acted as clever as any gentleman could do," said Fanny, blushing, "and you must excuse me, too; I thought you didn't look like a judge. You're an artist, are you not?"

"What makes you think so? My mountain hat? I'm home on a vacation, but I'm sorry to say you wouldn't have missed it far if you had taken me for a judge; I'm a jurist, and am going to be appointed assessor of the district court."

"What a pity!" said Fanny.

"Why? Are you afraid of jurists?"

"No, but artists are such clever fellows!"

"Then that leaves me in the cold," laughed Leo. "Look there, the stable boy had more sense than I had; there comes our coach; he made a good guess at my mistake."

Fanny's baggage was put in, together with a basketful of cakes and pears that had come from Berger's.

"That basket makes me feel like bursting out laughing," said Leo when he seized the reins; "do you know what my mother said when she handed me that? 'Here's something for that little child,'

she said, 'but take care she doesn't overeat herself and get sick!' "

"She's a prophet," laughed Fanny; "they kept us so strict in Willdorf that I could ruin a pear orchard in a week if they would give me leave."

"Did they now? I thought it was a very liberal college," said Leo; "you've got one clever teacher there, anyhow, if Miss Gunther is there yet. They nearly all worship her, they say."

"I do, for one," said Fanny; "you have no idea how kind and clever she is; there couldn't be a better teacher."

"And she wasn't brought up for it, either," said Leo; "her people were very well off, but lost all they had in the failure of that Herburg bank. Her grandmother had a house with a garden fine enough for a city park."

"Why! I never knew that," said Fanny; "I made sure her folks had been poor and taught her to take care of youngsters, because she had such patience with some of us."

" Well, did you enjoy your railway ride?" asked Leo.

"Yes, indeed."

Fanny began to give short answers; her mind had wandered back to Miss Gunther and her strange fate.

Still she stole an occasional look at the black eyes and sunburned face of her companion, and could not help suspecting that his appearance at Willdorf College might endanger the monopoly of Professor Althoff. When the coach drew up at the veranda of the Berger country seat a venerable-looking lady came down to receive the guest.

"The little girl didn't come, mamma," said Leo, "so I have brought Miss Fanny Malden."

"Yes, he couldn't help it," laughed Fanny, "nor I either. My father did have a baby-girl one time, but that's seventeen years ago and I could not help growing a bit in the meanwhile."

Mrs. Berger welcomed her guest with an embrace and a kiss, and presently the old judge, too, came hobbling out and joined in the laugh at the recital of Leo's mistake.

"Why! I'd have known her at once," said he; "she's just the picture of her father—same eyes, same mouth, same way of watching your face when you talk."

"Yes, but he's an old soldier and they never run," laughed Fanny; "and I did run away from Leo, and all that stopped me was my tight shoes. In my old Allenton brogans he'd have never caught me at all."

"Is this my own Tomboy, grown into a Fashionable Young Lady?"—Page 215.

Tam. a Tom.]

"Why! you caught a beauty, Leo," said the old judge, when Mrs. Berger had conducted her visitor to the guest-room; "don't you think she would make a stir at our country ball?"

"She's too much of a tomboy to care for such things," said Leo; "oh, pa—has the evening paper come yet?"

Judge Berger watched his son sideways, with his eyes twinkling under his bushy white brows.

"Evening paper? yes, there it is," said he; "I thought you had something else to interest you; or was I mistaken?"

But Leo Berger had already dived into the evening news.

"And now let me apologize for your own folks, pet," said the old judge, when the family adjourned to the chimney corner after supper; "it may have surprised you that your father did not come; but he couldn't help himself; they have the strangest kind of a visitor. He's your uncle—your mamma's brother, so I ought to be careful how I talk about him, but a more eccentric traveler does not roam the surface of this planet just now. He comes and goes like a will-o'-the-wisp; here to-day, and a hundred miles off to-morrow; has been in Africa and the Holy Land, but never yet found an

inducement to settle down and give his boots a few weeks' rest. Ten or twelve days is about the longest he has ever been known to stop in one place, and your folks did not know what moment the spirit might move him again and create a demand for railway facilities at a moment's notice.''

''Why—how does he make a living?'' asked the niece of this newly discovered uncle.

''Oh, he's an artist,'' said the judge, ''and several of his landscapes were bought at prize picture rates, and the way he lives he doesn't spend much, in spite of his everlasting travels. When he does stop in any place for a few days he takes long, solitary strolls in the mountains and lives on bread and milk, or whatever he can find ready in a woodchopper's cabin.''

''What's the matter with him? He must be crazy,'' laughed Fanny; ''I didn't think artists would act like that.''

''I know you didn't,'' said Leo Berger; ''say, papa, d'ye know that she wouldn't believe I could be a jurist; she told me I was too clever for that, and that I must be an artist.''

''Oh, don't, now,'' protested Fanny, blushing; ''but, please, what do you think is the matter with

him,—that artist, I mean; he must be a sort of wandering Jew?''

''There's something on his mind, they say; maybe some disappointment,'' said the judge; ''or some distressing recollection that won't let him rest. Perhaps your mother could tell you; all I know is that he hasn't been always that way. He lived nearly two years in Herburg one time.''

''What a lovely place you have here,'' cried Fanny, when the old judge beckoned her to a window soon after, and showed her the moonlight glittering on a broad river or lake; ''I could stay here all summer, fishing.''

''Suppose you do?'' said the judge; ''do stay a few weeks, anyhow; we're living so alone here, you would be a godsend; yes, and we would let you fish —sun-perch by the thousands, and eels and carp. Leo would take you out boat-riding, and you could climb around on the rocks and pick berries and ferns——''

''Oh, please, don't torment me,'' laughed Miss Tomboy. ''I would be in paradise, I know; but I have to go home. I'm just dying to see that little rascal of a chubby-faced boy they got—wait''—rummaging her pocket; ''yes, here it is. Just look at this photograph, and I leave it to you if I can help

wanting to hug the life out of him, and I do want to see my pa, too."

"You're right, sweet," said Mrs. Berger, patting her guest's curly head; "happiness, like charity, begins at home; but after that little fellow has pulled out as many of your curls as you can spare you must come and see us."

"The squire invites us to come over on harvest home day," said the judge. "What do you say; will you let us come and allow us to take you along when we go back?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Fanny; "but be sure now and keep your word. If you come and help us eat grapes, I'll go back with you and help you catch fish."

"Good," laughed the judge; "let's shake hands on that. That's right, but now don't forget your promise."

"Oh, no, indeed," said Fanny; "in Willdorf College shaking hands on something was as good as an oath. You will come, too," said she, turning to Leo, "won't you, now?"

"Yes, of course," said Leo, "I'm included in that bargain; or hadn't we two better shake hands on it, too?"

"No, I don't doubt your word," laughed Fanny.

"How could I—since you told me you are a lawyer!"

"There, she got you!" laughed the old judge, slapping his boy's shoulder, and for just one moment Fanny felt sorry that harvest home was so near the end of the year. She had always doubted if in the wide world there could be any place like home, but she vaguely began to suspect the possibility of that fact.

Early the next morning Leo Berger took his father's guest to a branch railway with a station near Allendorf, and about eight o'clock the one daily passenger train came trundling along, and stopped long enough to accommodate a mass-meeting party, though Fanny Malden was the only passenger at that depot.

"And now you must give me your hand," said Leo, when the engine at last gave a snort; "between that chubby brother and funny uncle of yours they will probably make you forget us, but when harvest home comes you can rely on it I won't forget to have my boat ready."

The train started, and Fanny for a moment experienced a repetition of the same emotion that had modified the joy of her homeward departure from Willdorf. What kind folks were those Bergers,

and how clever that boy of theirs had acted, from beginning to end! She had allowed him to kiss her hand, and couldn't bring herself to regret it, though she wondered if Miss Gunther would not have given her a scolding.

"Miss Reymar would, I think," she muttered to herself, "and I know Mrs. Lead would, but I do not care," and Fanny had a blush all to herself. Her only fellow-passengers were an old army officer and a couple of farmers, and before long Fanny began to recognize the hill tops of Beech Ridge; yes that was Hunters' Rest and the Fox Gap, and over yonder she caught a glimpse of Pine Creek bridge with the big shade trees near her favorite fishing place.

"Allenton Junction!" called out the conductor, and there was the old depot, and her father standing in the front rank of the crowd that awaited the arrival of the train.

Her mother, too, had come, and now stepped to the very edge of the platform, and without a moment's hesitation Miss Tomboy flung herself into her arms. "Mamma, dear mamma!" she sobbed, and a long embrace sealed the pledge of forgiveness and love.

Then came her father's turn. "Why, Fanny, pet," said he, when she had hugged him till she

panted for breath, "is this my own Tomboy, grown into a fashionable young lady?"—holding her off at arm's length. "I can't quite believe it, till I find out if you can still climb a tree!"

"You'll soon know it, if the pears on the pond tree are ripe," laughed Fanny, dancing all around him in the exuberance of her joy. "How's Joe and the kid?"

"I take it all back; yes, you're my own Fan-boy still," laughed the squire; 'but first let me introduce you to another newcomer. This is your Uncle Herbert, Fan, a great traveler and artist; he can show you tricks, painting mountains, and climbing them, too."

"So that's a real artist, is he?" thought Fanny Malden, as she took the hand of a broad-shouldered and rather thickset man, as dark as a Spaniard, and with a beard like a mane. His brown felt hat was crushed out of all shape, and his velveteen shooting-jacket looked as if it had served the purpose of a camp-blanket. "If he is an artist, I like jurists best," thought Fanny Malden.

Oh, and here was Joe, too, and he had brought her pup along. Fanny knew Spot right away by the white marks on his shoulders, but he had grown into a big dog now, bigger than Brownie.

But he had to come into the coach, all the same; "I'm not going to lose him again, I can tell you that," said Miss Tomboy, and she did not consent to his expulsion till they had turned into the yard-lane and there was no possible risk of his losing his way now. A minute after Fanny herself jumped off and made a rush for the house.

"How do you like her, Herbert?" asked Squire Malden.

"Her? Him, you mean," said the artist; "why, that's a boy—good for excursions and hunting trips —if I stay till October."

"Never mind that fellow," said Mrs. Malden, when the squire looked disappointed; "he didn't seen her two years ago, or he wouldn't talk like that. She has just improved in every way, I think."

"Hasn't she now?" said the squire proudly— "there! look at that, she found him, in spite of all precautions."

They had reached the veranda, and in the open door stood Fanny, hugging and kissing her little brother.

"No, you don't," laughed Fanny when she saw her mother come up the steps with open arms; "I'm not half done with this little rogue yet. I'll make

him give me a kiss before I let him go,'' dancing out of the way, and still cuddling Master Chubb.

''Why, what's the matter now?'' she asked when the cherub burst out squalling; ''did he think I was going to eat him up? I'll do that some day, I know, if he gets the least bit prettier; here''—with a parting kiss—''you can have him awhile to let me see what you do to keep him quiet.''

''Now come up to your room, Fan,'' said the squire; ''let me see if you can find the way alone?''

Fanny showed him by darting upstairs and whisking into a side hall. ''Oh, pa! who did all this?'' said she, when her father overtook her at last. ''Look at all these pretty books and that big artist table! so many colors and different kinds of paper! Is this where Uncle Herbert paints his pictures?''

''No, indeed, or you couldn't cross the floor for scattered newspapers and knickknacks,'' laughed the squire; ''wait till you see his den; no, this is all your own, but he will help you once in awhile and teach you painting trees and mountains.''

''Wouldn't that be nice,'' said Fanny, catching fire at the idea; ''then I can make a picture of Beech Ridge and send it to poor Nellie Holden.''

''How is that dear girl getting on?'' asked Squire Malden.

"I wanted her to come along ever so much," said Fanny, "but she had to stay and study; they want her to be a governess or a teacher, like Miss Gunther. She's so poor, pa; oh, dear me! So many poor people!"

But Fanny was too happy to give in to such reveries, and after dinner she gave her mamma the slip, and ran out in the yard to have a good romp with the friends of her tomboyhood.

How the pups had grown, and the lambs and calves! Joe took her on a round of inspection—showed her the improved dovecot, the new pump, the new partition for ewes and lambs in the sheep stable, but Fanny drew the line at last when he wanted to show her the new pigpen.

"I have to hurry back, Joe," said she; "they're hunting me now, I know; I just whisked out when they gave me the first chance."

"It's a pity, Miss Fan," said Joe; "you saw the new gate yourself, I reckon, but that new pig-stable! It's so nice it had made you feel like living there yourself, if you see it."

"All right," laughed Fanny, "we must see it, then—to-morrow—there! what did I tell you?—here they come hunting me."

CHAPTER XIII.

A MONTH had passed, and Fanny had visited all her favorite playgrounds from Hunter's Rest to the Fountain Meadows, and was getting as sunburned as a gypsy—to complete her father's happiness. "She has lost her red cheeks, that's one reason why I shall never send her back," Squire Malden had told his wife the first evening.

"Are you not afraid they will lose their way?" said Fanny's mother, when Uncle Herbert had taken her Tomboy out on another sketching tour; "I'm afraid they will climb to the very top of the ridge before they stop."

"Oh, you can't lose them," laughed the squire, "but I do hope they will not stay quite as long as last Saturday. There is no saying what an eccentric genius might not do, or a tomboy; they will climb up to Seaver's Peak some day."

"And Fanny is getting too old for such pranks," said Mrs. Malden. "She is in her eighteenth year now."

"Yes—but a child in every other sense," said the squire.

"I don't know; she might undeceive you some day."

"How do you mean?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Oh, you know I'm not good at riddles," laughed the squire, "what do you mean? Would she go back to Willdorf of her own accord?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Malden, "but I do know that she wants to go back to the Bergers.' And she said enough to make me sure that it isn't that fish pond alone. It's that boy Leo."

The squire was struck dumb with amazement.

"She's asking strange questions about him and is trying to draw his profile. I can't help thinking she has met her fate."

"What! Oh, come!" shouted the squire, "a joke is a joke; you cannot possibly be in earnest?"

Mrs. Malden made no reply, but smiled mysteriously.

"She didn't tell you—did she?"

"No, indeed, but it made me laugh how it will open your eyes when the Bergers come here and bring the owner of that rowboat along."

"I wish they would come," said the squire, " I

want to use my own eyes and settle that question. Women can see further in such cases, I know, but I can't help thinking you must be mistaken.''

''Here's a letter from Willdorf College,'' said the squire one evening, when Joe came in with the mail. That's for you, Fan.''

''Miss Gunther, I expect,'' said Fanny; ''isn't she kind! She did keep her word then!''

''Is that how she writes my name?'' asked her father, inspecting the envelope; ''look here: 'Cair of Squire Malden.' ''

''Let me see—why! That's Nellie's handwriting!'' cried Fanny; ''poor dear! she can't spell, but she's the best girl in this whole world.''

''Any good news?'' asked the squire, when Fanny suddenly jumped up and waved the letter over her head.

''Good news? I should say so! though I should never have guessed it if you had given me a hundred tries. Just listen:

'' 'DEAR FAN: When you come to see us next yeer or next you will find Blue Eyes in the same old place, I'm not going to leave at all, now. Ain't you glad?

'' 'But you think I got crazy? Just wait till I tell you what happen.

"'Last Saturday Miss Rymer she come up to my room and scare me; you knows she never come unless we done something awful. I did get scared, but she take my hand and then I knew she wasn't mad, but it scare me all the same. Here's a letter said she, from a ledy that wants a good governess—one that treats the chillern right and I'm going to recommend you. Would I like to go she ask, and I didn't know what to say. But how could I say no? I'm too poor to have my own way, so I said yes, and cried all night. I had only three days' time and the second day I began packing, and that made me cry more than ever. I was cryin' so I did not hear the door open, and all at wonst Professor Althoff was come in and ask me what made me cry. I just hid my face and couldn't tell. But he knew it and sais so, and that made it all worse. I sat on my trunk sobbing worse than before. Can you answer me one question, he ask? Look me in the face. I looked just wonce, and all a sudden he had me in his arms and ask me if I want to stay in Willdorf and be his little wife.

"'I hid my face, but I said yes, and as soon as I do that he had me in his arm again.

"'I had not been happy one day, Fan, since you left, but that made up for it. I felt as if I was the happiest girl in this whole world. I tell you some day how happy I was; I can't write it at all.

"'Then we went and told the principal and she kiss me and took me in her arm, and that same day

all the girls knew it. It just set them crazy, but Orla got over it and gave me her best brooch the next morning.

" 'Professor Althoff gave me a ring, and he's gone now to his mother, but he will be back in a week, and then we make up our mind about the wedding day. If nothing happen it will be New Year, said Professor Althoff.

" 'And now I can't write you some more, but you must promise and come to my wedding; I tell you what day, and remain your best friend

" 'BLUE EYES.' "

"Poor dear girl, she deserves her happiness," said Mrs. Malden, who had peeped over Fanny's shoulder while she was spelling out her droll letter, and by way of answer Fanny kissed her hand. "Thank you, in my best friend's name," that meant, in language more eloquent than any words, for Squire Malden at once went to his room, and in less than a minute came back with a sealed envelope.

"There, Fan," said he, "don't lose that, and if you write to your pet you inclose that without any comment. She has been a good friend to you, and if she can't come to see us we have to thank her in some way or other."

To his surprise Fanny burst out crying, and then

caught him around the neck to hide her face on his shoulder.

"How clever you are, pa; I always wanted to ask you, but I was afraid. But whatever that is I'll send her a wedding present of my own."

"You're a good girl," said the squire, patting her head, "and to reward you I'll tell you another piece of good news that your ma and I found out to-day: the Bergers are going to be here to-morrow and stay till Saturday night."

"Is that a fact? Oh, ma! Are they *ll* coming?" asked Fanny, while her father watched her face very closely. "Oh, please! Can I run up and look at that blue dress of mine that came in the wash this morning?"

And away she darted, humming her favorite tune.

Squire Malden shook his head. "You may be right, Annie," said he, with a sigh, "but let's hope we are both mistaken."

There was a thunder shower the next morning, and it was still raining when Joe hitched up his horses for the trip to the depot, so Fanny had to stay behind and keep her mother company, while the squire, with an armful of reserve umbrellas and rubber coats, went along to meet the expected visitors.

"The train is late again," said Mrs. Malden, when Fanny had watched at the window nearly half an hour; "but never mind; you can look at a picture book or try some of that new sheet music to while time away."

Fanny strolled along the open hall to take another look at the depot road, but there was nothing in sight, and seeing her Uncle Herbert in the library, she ran up to her own room to get a photograph album that she had often promised to show him.

"Look here, uncle," said she, when she came dancing up to his table, "you asked me about that girl Nellie last evening; here's her picture. Don't you think that's the sweetest face you ever saw?"

"A pretty mouth, yes," said the connoisseur, "but too broad-faced for a beauty; she's Russian or Swedish, you told me?"

"Yes, Danish, with a Swedish mother."

"I thought so. And here's another foreigner: just look at that nose!"

"Why! How can you tell? Yes, that's a Russian: Orla Sassuwitch; that name always made me laugh."

"And this is your principal, I suppose?"

"You guessed it again; but this makes her older-

looking than she really is. Here are some of the other teachers.''

''Halloo! who's this? What's the name of this girl?''

Fanny had turned her head, with half a mind to bolt for the hall, and her uncle had to repeat his question.

''Do you know her? Say, Fanny, who is this girl?''

''That? Oh, that's one of the teachers; that's Miss Gunther, the one that was so good to me and took me along to the depot. Maybe you have seen her before?''

''I'm not sure, she reminds me wonderfully of somebody—but that was a long time ago,'' said the artist, still staring at the portrait of the young teacher. ''Do you know her age?''

''She told me, but I forgot—twenty-five anyhow, I should say, or twenty-six. Do you think she's pretty?''

Uncle Herbert made no reply. ''Twenty-five?'' said he in a low voice, as to himself; then nodded and looked at the photograph once more. ''What is her name, you say?''

''Gunther, Miss Charlotte Gunther.''

''Charlotte? Have you a good memory, Fanny?

Do you know if you ever heard her speak of a Charlotte Ellard?''

Fanny shook her head. ''She may have changed her name,'' said she after some reflection; ''they were very well off, her folks, one time, and then lost all they had, and she had to make a living the best way she could. Who did you think she reminded you of?''

No reply. Uncle Herbert was walking slowly up and down the library, with his mind in the land of bygone days, and at any other time Fanny would think his conduct rather strange, but just then there was a sound of wheels on the gravel road and Miss Tomboy fairly flew to the hall window.

''Here they come now,'' she cried, and downstairs, three steps at each jump.

The old judge clambered out first, and embraced Fanny as cordially as if he had met a pet child of his own. Leo kissed Mrs. Malden's hand and then Fanny's, who had held out both of hers at once and got a handshake for good measure.

'' What weather!'' cried Mrs. Malden; ''come in, come in, or you will get all wet''—conducting the guests to their rooms, while Fanny still lingered on the veranda.

Leo Berger hesitated a moment, then turned back

and shook the water off his rubber coat. "This rain made you grow, Miss Malden," he laughed. "They can't advertise you for a little girl any more, if you get lost on the railroad."

"What a pity you should have had such bad luck," said Fanny; "just look at that shower again! If it would just stop for a minute I would take you out and show you our nice playgrounds. It seems whenever I am hoping for a little fun there is always something bound to come along and spoil it"— pouting and drying her eyes with her hand.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked Leo; "you are not crying, are you?"

"No, no, it's just the rain," said Fanny; "these vine leaves fill with water and then tip over and drench you."

"You do look as if you had been crying."

"Do I? Oh, yes, I know what you mean. I did come near crying, but it was because we all laughed till it almost made us cry; we got such a funny letter, Mr. Berger. Do you remember that Danish girl I told you about?"

"The one who talks so strange and asked her partner if he would go to blazes?"

"Yes, the same. What a memory you have, Mr. Berger! Fancy you remembering a little thing like

that! Well, she went and got married, or betrothed, and it just would choke you the way she writes about it.''

''Have you got that letter yet?''

''Yes''—diving in her pocket—''yes, here it is. I have to look at it and have a good laugh every few minutes.''

''Oh, do let me see it?''

''Hold on! No, you mustn't,'' laughed Fanny; ''she's my best friend and I mustn't give all her little secrets away like that! It's bad enough that we are poking fun at her. Wait—I'll read you one passage, anyhow.''

''Oh, don't be cruel,'' said Leo. ''I'm dying to hear it all''—advancing as if to capture the document by stratagem.

''You won't hear it or see it, then,'' said Fanny, pocketing the letter and darting into the house.

''Never mind, I'll catch you yet!'' laughed Leo. ''You promised to read it to me.''

''Well, I will, after I read it over and see what's fit for publication,'' said Fanny, with one hand on the banisters. ''You must excuse me, now; they want me upstairs.''

Ten minutes after Leo caught Fanny in the parlor, sorting an armful of sheet music, while her

parents were entertaining the visitors with a résumé of neighborhood news.

"Well," asked Leo, "where is that letter?"

"Wait till we are alone," whispered Fanny; "they want me to play, but I hope I can't find the piece they were talking about."

"Oh, Fanny," said Mrs. Malden, "run and see if you can't find your uncle; tell him, please."

"All right," said Fanny, glad to drop the musical programme; "he's upstairs in the library, I think."

"You must excuse his strange ways," said the squire when Fanny was gone; "he will pick up a book and get so interested in it that he forgets eating and drinking."

"Oh, I know," laughed the old judge, "he has a way of his own for doing everything. Does he still take fits of mountain-fever and camp in the wilderness to hear the owls hoot?"

"That's what he will do next," said Mrs. Malden; and the habits of the eccentric artist remained the topic of conversation for at least ten minutes; but Fanny did not return.

Judge Berger then treated his friends to an account of a similar oddity in a suburb of Herburg—an old bachelor who occupied a dilapidated store-

house at the upper end of town, and never asked the assistance of a human being, where his own ingenuity could possibly supply his wants.

While they were still chatting Leo slipped out unperceived. "I thought I'd catch you," he laughed, when he found Miss Tomboy on the third-story balcony, rocking in her uncle's armchair and watching the rain; "are you hiding here to let that piano scheme die a natural death?"

"Why, you scared me," said Fanny; "you slipped out here on tiptoes, didn't you? No, I'm watching for Uncle Herbert. He must be out in the garden, hunting herbs."

"What! In that rain?"

"Oh, you don't know him if you suppose he would mind that," laughed Fanny. "He says it's healthy to get yourself used to all sorts of wind and weather. He would just as soon be wet as dry, like a Newfoundlander. I looked for him in the library and his own room and everywhere, but he's gone; so I suppose he's enjoying the rain and I'm watching to call him if he comes in sight."

"That's a good plan," said Leo; "you can see the whole country from up here. Well, while we wait, suppose you read me that letter?"

"Suppose I don't?"

"No, I got you this time; you know what you promised me; well, we are alone now, so there's no excuse at all. Let's see it, if you are too busy to read."

"I told you once, so don't bother," said Miss Tomboy. The truth is she was getting nettled at the way he had caught her in a trap and pushed his advantage.

"Read me a few passages, anyhow, do," coaxed Leo, after watching her in silence for some time.

"Well, get a chair then," said Fanny. "I don't want you to stand there and peep over my shoulder."

Leo did find a chair, and it ended in their reading Nellie's letter together, amid peals of laughter.

"Now then," said Fanny, when they were done, "Master Mischief, what have you made me do? Nellie will never forgive me if she comes here and you should tell."

"But I don't," said Leo, "I never tell; and I will be quite good now and do all you ask me, if you will just answer me one question."

Fanny gasped. Had he trapped her for that purpose?

"Hadn't we better go down, now?" she stammered.

"Directly," said he, "but"—taking her hand—

"first tell me what you would say if anybody asked you the question Herr Althoff asked Nellie?"

"Nothing," said Fanny; "yes, perhaps it would be best to tell him plainly he was mistaken. I don't like anybody."

"Would you not say 'yes' if I should ask you, Fanny, dear?" Fanny hid her face in her hands. "Wouldn't you, Fanny?"

"No, never!" burst out Miss Tomboy, turning her head and staring out in the rain with an ominous frown.

"Never? Oh, Fanny, is that your last word? Tell me, dear; the happiness of my life is at stake!"

He waited a full minute, then sank back in his chair and pressed his face against his arm.

Fanny had not moved, but her heart beat as she had never felt it beat before. She was on the point of rising and leaving the balcony, yielding to the promptings of her stubborn mood, when Lucy's pale face rose before her inner eye, and a warning voice seemed to whisper: "Your happiness, too, is at stake; do you want to lose him? Remember my fate!"

"Leo," said Fanny softly, rising and approaching her lover a step or two, then stopped, dismayed at her own boldness.

She had only whispered that one word, but Leo had heard it, and at once caught her in his arms. "I knew I wasn't mistaken; I knew it! Fanny, darling! You are mine now forever!"

"But no kissing, mind!" said Fanny, trying to disengage herself when his lips touched her flaming cheek.

"Well, your hand, then," laughed Leo—"to begin with." He was still holding her in his arms, when the glass door opened and the squire with his wife and guests stepped out on the balcony. A single glance sufficed to explain the situation, and Judge Berger clasped Fanny to his heart.

Squire Malden had stopped, almost petrified with amazement. "Wasn't I right, Henry?" said his wife; "now use your own eyes! Wasn't I right that your little girl has grown considerably—heart and all?"

"Oh, Fanny, Fanny," he groaned, "can that be true? Is it possible my own pet tomboy is going to leave me?"

That brought Fanny round his neck with tears and never-ending kisses. "Dear, best papa," she sobbed, "you know I love you, but—how could I help it?"

But where was Uncle Herbert all this time?

They looked for him on the turret and in the conservatory, and then in his own room again.

"Come here, all of you," cried the squire after a closer inspection of the artist's den. "His trunk is gone and his overcoat and his top boots, too! Was there ever a crazier fellow outside of Bedlam! He had to choose this of all times to skip! He's gone for good, that's clear!"

Inquiries then elicited the fact that half an hour after the arrival of the visitors, and while the rain was at its worst, Uncle Herbert had given Joe two dollars to hitch up again and drive him to the depot, in time for the accommodation train.

Three weeks passed before the explanation came at last in the form of a letter that set the whole house agog with amazement, and almost drove Fanny out of her wits. It was a double letter from Geneva, Switzerland, and inclosed a card with a vignette of two clasped hands and the names of Herbert Lander and Charlotte Gunther Ellard.

"We are on our bridal tour," wrote the artist; "Charlotte and I are going to spend the winter in Italy. That may surprise you, but there's really nothing surprising about it. We were betrothed a good many years ago, but—never mind what; we forgot to mention it, that's all."

"Now I'm your aunt, dear," wrote Mrs. Lander, *née* Gunther. "Who would have thought it? The next time I write I'll tell you how it all happened. Do you still remember that story about poor Lucy? Her real name was Charlotte. And the artist? Perhaps you can guess his name. Write to me at Rome."

And to Rome went a whole package of letters, with a short note of Mrs. Malden's:

"Your Fanny, too, is betrothed; climbs mountains, for all that; and is still something of a boy, but a tomboy no longer. The work of redemption you began a year ago was completed in Allenton, and the last trace of her wild waywardness has finally been cured by love."

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